GREEK THINKERS

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A HISTORY OF ANCIENT PHILOSOPHY

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To the Memory

OF MY SISTER

JOSEPHINE VON WERTHEIMSTEIN

NOV. 19, 1820 : JULY 16, 1894

I DEDICATE

THIS VOLUME

AUTHOR'S PREFACE.

In this volume (Volumes II. and III. in the English edition) the author has treated of Socrates, the Socratics, and Plato, but has not been able to add an account of Plato's pupils, including Aristotle and his successors. The space requisite for that purpose has been absorbed by the discussion of Plato's works with a fulness which proved more and more absolutely necessary as the work progressed. The author was, indeed, convinced from the beginning that the extraction of a Platonic system from the philosopher's writings was an impracticable task, and that any attempt in that direction could only yield an inadequate result. But the indispensability of not confining the undertaking within too narrow bounds was first made manifest to the author by the execution of it. The object in view was not merely to ascertain with approximate certainty and describe with the greatest possible clearness the progress of Plato's development. A full appreciation of the philosopher—and that not in his capacity of literary artist alone—was only to be gained by an account of the course and structure of at least the greater works. Not otherwise do we perceive that which in Plato is at once the most truly attractive and the most eminently important feature: the inner workings of his powerful intellect and profound feeling, the manifold currents of thought and emotion, currents which sometimes flow together, but which also, as in the "Philebus" (see Book V.

chap. xviii.), occasionally cross or oppose each other. The task of exposition is one of whose magnitude the author is increasingly conscious; and he can only hope that he has not fallen too unpardonably short of its demands.

VIENNA,
March, 1902.

In the second edition, which has followed the first after so short an interval, no one will expect to find radical alterations. But in a considerable number of passages the author has endeavoured, not, as he hopes, altogether without success, to effect improvements in his exposition.

TH. GOMPERZ.

VIENNA,
December, 1902.

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BOOK IV.

SOCRATES AND THE SOCRATICS.

Διὸ καὶ Κλεάνθης ἐν τῷ δευτέρῳ περὶ ἡδονῆς τὸν Σωκράτην φησὶ παρ' ἕκαστα διδάσκειν ὡς ὁ αὐτὸς δίκαιός τε καὶ εὐδαίμων ἀνήρ, καὶ τῷ πρώτῳ διελόντι τὸ δίκαιον ἀπὸ τοῦ συμφέροντος καταρᾶσθαι ὡς ἀσεβές τι πρᾶγμα δεδρακότι.—CLEMENS ALEXANDRINUS, "Strom." ii. 22, 499 P.

GREEK THINKERS.

CHAPTER I.

CHANGES IN FAITH AND MORALS.

1. THE Homeric poems show us only the beginnings of city life. The course of subsequent development was determined, as we may confidently affirm, by three main causes —an increase in the density of population ; a corresponding advance in the division of labour ; and a consequent accumulation of greater and greater masses of humanity in cities, which grew in number and importance. Civic life began to gain in breadth and freedom, with results which affected religion and morality as well. The social instincts which, rooted as they are in the family affections, had, in the heroic age, seldom manifested themselves beyond the circle of blood-relationship, and then only when transplanted to the soil of personal loyalty, now extended their dominion over a wider and wider area. Still greater was the progress of social morality, though it was only gradually, and in spite of numberless obstacles, that larger and larger associations of men were brought within its scope. The hostile camps which faced each other in the war of classes long remained separated by a chasm too wide to be bridged by any feeling of common humanity. In the second half of the sixth century we find the Megarian aristocrat Theognis longing to "drink the black blood" of his adversaries, with the same unbridled passion as had characterized the Homeric hero praying that he might "devour his

enemy raw." And so complete, at that time, was the dominion of the spirit of faction over the minds of men, that, in the poems of the same Theognis, the words "good" and "bad" have lost all reference to a moral standard, and become mere party-names for the upper and lower classes, then at strife with each other. But we must not dwell exclusively on the influences which kept men divided. Other causes were at work, making for closer and closer union, and these both deserve and will repay attentive study.

A higher value was set on human life. In Homer's time he who had slain a man was protected by payment of the blood-fine from the avenging kinsman. "A life for a life" was the exception, not the rule. Much stricter was the ethical standard of the post-Homeric period. Every murder, it was now held, must be expiated in blood: till this be done, the state is polluted, the gods insulted. For this reason the office of avenger was assumed by the state itself; not, it is true, without intervention of those most nearly concerned. This advance has been ascribed to that deepening of the belief in souls to which we have already alluded, and also to the influence of a circle of prophets who made the Delphic oracle the medium of their efforts in the cause of ethical reform. There may be something in this view, but it is assuredly not the whole truth. That the punishment of crime should be accounted a public concern, and unpunished crime a public disgrace, was without doubt an advance such as influences of the kind we have just alluded to may well have helped to bring about. But the doctrine that blood must atone for blood is not specially distinctive of the highest stages of ethical development. If we go to modern Arabia, we find this doctrine prevailing among the inhabitants of the desert, with whom the vendetta is an institution, while the dwellers in cities content themselves with exacting the blood-fine. Homeric practice does not, in this particular, bear the stamp of the earliest antiquity; rather may we see in it just such a relaxation of primitive morality as would naturally mark a period of migrations and warlike

adventure, in which human life had been cheapened below its normal rate, and the protective power of the ties of kinship had been weakened. We may here note, not for the first time (see Vol. I. p. 80), that the faith and practice of post-Homeric times appear as the true continuation of the earliest traditions of the race, while the state of society depicted in epic poetry is to be regarded as a temporary deviation from the direct line of development.

Another point must be emphasized. Allowing that this advance in civilization was in part due to the activity of religious enthusiasts, the latter were but instruments in a movement whose causes were of a more general order. As roving and warlike ideals gave way before a settled and peaceable mode of life, and the bourgeois class and the bourgeois temperament gained predominance, men's ideas about the world of gods could not but suffer change. The forces of nature, which had formerly been worshipped solely for their irresistible power, now became, in ever-increasing degree, the protectors and upholders of that good order which is indispensable for the common welfare (cf. Vol. I. p. 133, *seq.*). And as the concurrent progress of natural science introduced more and more of uniformity into men's conception of the universe, so that in the divine government of the world less and less room could be seen for the operation of conflicting passions and caprices, there was brought about a change in religious ideas which may be described, with a near approach to truth, as a moralization of the primitive powers of nature. The qualification is necessary, for the religion of the Hellenes remained a religion of nature to the end. But there now appeared, as its central figure, a power which defended right and punished crime—a power which generally took form as Zeus, the god of the heavens, supreme over the other deities, but which was also referred to simply as "God," without further qualification, or as "The Divine," a mode of speech from which polytheistic faith took no serious harm. Thus was the Greek mind led to paint its many-coloured picture of the world of gods. We have already seen this picture in the pages of Herodotus, and it meets

us again in the great poets, especially the tragedians, among whom we are bound to give precedence to Æschylus.

2. We are unwilling to name the greatest of Greek poets without paying due toll of reverent gratitude. The purifying power of poetry has been more written about than felt. He who would come under its direct influence should glance through a play of Æschylus. He will hardly read twenty lines without feeling that a liberating, an ennobling, an enlarging influence has been exerted upon his soul. We are here faced by one of the most attractive problems of human nature. Poetry shares with music the power, possessed in a lower degree by the other arts, and even by the beautiful in nature, of creating that inward peace which reigns when the whole personality dominates over its minor elements, and of producing the intense pleasure peculiar to this state of psychical equilibrium. How it is that such an effect is possible, is a question which may perhaps be answered, with more assurance than is justifiable now, in an age when æsthetic as well as ethical problems come to be treated on the lines of biology. But, to resume, there are two great difficulties in utilizing the testimony of Æschylus and his successors as to the changes in Greek thought. The poet is influenced by artistic considerations scarcely less than by his speculative and religious views, and the dramatist must endow his creations with distinctive beliefs and dispositions, only in part harmonizing with his own. But, after making wide allowance for these restrictions, enough remains to render the testimony of this extraordinary man, one who was not only the mirror, but also in part the maker of his times, of the greatest possible value to us.

To Æschylus, more than to any other, is due the conception of the supreme God, the "ruler of rulers," the "most blessed of the blessed," as a requiting, a rewarding, and punishing judge. Firm as a rock is the poet's faith that every unrighteous deed must be expiated, and that, too, on earth. We ought not to be surprised at such optimism. Did not Æschylus fight at Marathon, at Salamis, and at

Platæa? Did he not see the world-compelling power of the "great king" miraculously humbled to the dust by little Greece, indeed, by his own modest Athens? He who had witnessed a divine judgment of this nature, and had been privileged to help in the execution of it with his own right arm, could have had little doubt in the omnipotence of divine justice, or in its realization on earth. Such were the thoughts amid which the poet lived and wrought, strong in the comfortable assurance that everything evil must in the end "make shipwreck on the rock of justice." This was the hope from which he drew happiness.

> "When Might and Right go joined in equal yoke,
> Was ever seen a fairer team than this?"

It is for this very reason that, as we have already remarked, he so seldom casts a glance beyond the limits of the present world. The raptures of the world to come, which the Theban Pindar, largely under the influence of the Orphic school, described with so much enthusiasm, were of little account to his Athenian contemporary, kindred soul as he was. But while the dramas of Æschylus reflect the triumphal glories of the Persian war, the gloomy, and quasi-irrational, features of traditional Greek religion are not wholly absent from his pages. He, like Herodotus, knows something of the envy and the ill will of the gods. But these portions of his inherited faith were placed by him as it were in the background of his scheme of the universe. Consider the Promethean trilogy. The Titan's guilt is his good will towards man; for this he endures the unspeakable torment assigned him by Zeus. But the torment does not last for ever. The conclusion of this powerful work had for its theme a reconciliation with the mighty god of the heavens, and the liberation of the benefactor of mankind from his chains. We have here what may be truly called a process of development, an advance to purer and higher ideals within the circle of the gods. This strange process—the counterpart of what we have already termed the creation in nature of peace out of struggle (Vol. I. p. 88)—admits of but one explanation.

The poet was under the necessity of reconciling the conflicting claims of religious tradition and of his own convictions. The two could not stand side by side without destroying each other. But, by alternate recognition, it was possible to do justice to both. Similar characteristics, developmental, we may call them, are to be noted in the Oresteia. At the bidding of the Delphic god, Orestes performs the commandment, horrible in its application to him, that he should execute vengeance upon the blood-guilty. But the matricide is seized by the madness sent upon him by the avenging spirits of Clytemnestra. In other words, the humane sentiment of the poet and his age revolts against the merciless severity of the old law of retaliation. The foundation of the Areopagus, with its milder procedure, forms a *dénouement* which reconciles the claims of conflicting ideals. There is another motive, of a still more subjective character, which may well have contributed to the unmistakable deviation from tradition which occurs in these trilogies. We may be sure that a passionate and richly endowed nature, like that of our poet, did not attain inward peace without a struggle. May we hazard the conjecture that he gives us, so to speak, a materialized representation of this slow and painful process of illumination and appeasement; that he has, without knowing it, projected his own spiritual experiences into the history of the world of gods? But though Æschylus is our main witness for the progress of the gods in morals and humane feeling, yet he by no means forsook the native soil of the Hellenic religion of nature. The theological wavering which we have already noticed in Herodotus, recurs in this far more strenuous soul. In that fragment of the "Daughters of the Sun," which we have already had occasion to quote in another connexion (Vol. I. p. 97), Æschylus appears as the prophet of that pantheistic faith which identified Zeus with the universe—an instructive example of the suppleness and freedom from dogmatic rigidity of the religious thought of those days.

For with stubborn persistency the old maintained its place side by side with the new, and might even, on

occasion, gain the upper hand. So it was in the case of Sophocles, the second of the great tragic poets, who stands much nearer to Homer than did his predecessor. It is true that in the work of the later poet there are traces of the spirit which breathes through the dramas of the earlier one, and indeed we may almost say that every fundamental thought of Æschylus is repeated by Sophocles. But though the strain is the same, the tones have lost their clearness, and the discords are harsher. We find here diminished power of thought coupled with increased wealth of observation. To use a comparison which must not be taken too seriously, Sophocles is less of an a-priorist, more of an empiric, than Æschylus. There is in his work a richer variety and a sharper delineation of individual characters, but less of unity in the outlook upon life and the world. At one time much ado was made about the "moral order of the universe" which was supposed to reign in the tragedies of Sophocles. A more impartial and penetrating criticism has destroyed the illusion. Sophocles, it is true, holds as firmly as Æschylus that the fate of man is governed by divine ordinance. But there is often the most glaring disproportion between character and destiny. Before the mysterious, sometimes appalling decrees of providence the poet stands in helpless perplexity. But though perplexed, he is not overwhelmed; he bows in reverence before the enigmas of divine governance. Was he not, in the judgment of his contemporaries, "one of the most pious," and apart from his profession of poet, "one of the honest Athenians"? He makes no claim to understand everything, nor is he presumptuous enough to measure swords with the incomprehensible. It is only occasionally that his outraged sense of justice, or a feeling of doubt and dread, betrays him into a cry of protest. Broadly speaking, he accepts with calmness the hardships of human destiny. His attitude may be described as one of renouncement, of resigned melancholy, so far as such an expression may be applied to so wonderfully harmonious a nature, to one so full of patriotic pride, and, above all, to one so keenly alive to the joy of artistic

creation. It was this temper that dictated the bitter saying, "Not to be born is the best fate of all." It is the same spirit that speaks to us in the works of Herodotus, himself a personal friend of Sophocles. The instability of good fortune, the mutability of all that is earthly, the precariousness of human existence, are themes which are touched upon in most ages not wholly given over to levity. But the key varies, and the emphasis is now stronger, now weaker, according to the individual character of the writer and the circumstances of his age. To the earlier Greek, life wore the aspect of an unclouded sky; but in the interval between Homer and Herodotus many and many a dark mass had gathered over its clear azure (cf. Vol. I. pp. 38, 80, 130, 136). And in the complaint of Herodotus, that Greece had been visited by heavier afflictions in his time than in twenty preceding generations, we may find something like a key to the peculiar and exceptional emphasis which Sophocles, Herodotus, and, above all, Euripides, lay on the ills of human life.

3. In Euripides, utterances of the kind we have mentioned no longer occur singly. The thought contained in the lines we have just quoted from Sophocles has now become a commonplace. This melancholy conception of life finds its strongest expression in a quatrain which may be thus rendered—

> "Greet the new-born with sad and dirge-like note
> Of mourning for the ills he must sustain;
> But, soon as death shall rescue him from pain,
> Sing pæans o'er his grave with lusty throat."

If it be asked what causes of a general nature produced this gloomy turn of sentiment, we must answer—First and foremost, the growth of reflexion. This explanation sounds more paradoxical than it really is. Let us imagine that the inventive genius of our own day had succeeded in carrying its latest and most magnificent triumphs to undreamt-of lengths—had liberated sense-perception from every limitation of space by which it is still hampered, had abolished the distinction between near and far for eye as

well as ear. Could such things be, life might well become an intolerable burden. A host of painful impressions would besiege us without intermission. Without cease we should be listening to the cries of women in travail, the groans of the dying, Should we find compensation in the more cheerful sounds which might simultaneously strike on our ears? Few would venture to say we should. Effects of a similar nature are produced by reflexion. It diminishes in no small measure the difference between what is near and what is remote in point of time. It increases to an astonishing degree the power and the habit both of anticipating future impressions and of reviving those of the past. It enables the past and the future to dispute the supremacy of the present. It transforms the thoughtless gaiety of youth into the earnestness of mature age, with its regretful retrospects and its anxious forecasts. Such, in the period we are now considering, was the effect of the growing tendency towards reflexion which was then beginning to work with a force and freshness as yet unimpaired by use. The justice of this view, with regard to Euripides at least, is proved by those passages which exhibit his pessimism, not as a ready-made product, but in the make. In primitive ages, and to-day among primitive folk, children are accounted an unquestioned blessing. This belief is not spared by the sceptical dialectic of Euripides. It is not only that he describes often and in moving fashion the sorrows of parents visited by adverse fate; he boldly faces the question whether the childless life is not the better one: "Children who turn out ill are the worst of misfortunes; those who turn out well bring with them a new pain—the torturing fear lest some evil befall them." It is the same when Euripides speaks of wealth or noble birth. The joy of possession is for him closely bound up with the anxious dread of loss. Noble birth is a danger, because it is no protection from poverty, and the ruined noble finds his family pride an obstacle in the way of a livelihood. Thus the eye of the poet, like that of the bird of night, is more at home in darkness than in light, and spies out everywhere the evil to which the

possession of good may give rise. We are thus led to the consideration of the objective causes of this pessimistic tendency. Their nature may be judged from the passage we have already quoted from Herodotus. To the pressure of the never-ending war we ought doubtless to add a change for the worse in home affairs. The economic conditions of Greece and of Athens at this time can scarcely be called normal. We learn this from the recrudescence of the class struggle which had been temporarily hushed, and from the violent character which this struggle now assumed. The revolutionary horrors, the deeds of desperation which accompanied the varying phases of the Peloponnesian war, and which are described in the immortal pages of Thucydides, can only be explained as the result of grave disturbance of the economic equilibrium. We cannot but suppose that the unceasing wars of this period must have made the poor poorer, while the opportunities for sudden enrichment, which are never wanting in tumultuous times, must have added to the wealth of the wealthier class. Social contrasts were thus greatly heightened. On this point we have the valuable testimony of Euripides himself, in his affecting commendation of the middle condition. It is thus that men praise a boon they have lost or fear to lose. The growing demands for state aid raised by the multitude may, perhaps, have been to some extent the outcome of increased desire for the good things of life, but they were also largely due to real distress, such as must have been occasioned by the repeated devastations of Attica, and the hampering of trade and industry by the protracted war.

We must further take into consideration the unrest peculiar to all great transition periods. In the mind of Euripides there is, after his pessimism, no more marked feature than his inconsistency, his oscillation between opposed tendencies of thought. Herein he is a true mirror of an age which was cutting itself adrift from the anchorage of authority and tradition. Just as in the cool grotto on the coast of Salamis, his muse's favourite workshop, he loved to sit and let the sea breeze fan his cheek, in the

same way he delighted to suffer each shifting breath of opinion in turn to seize upon and move his soul. Now he sings a lofty strain in praise of that bold and fearless spirit of inquiry which, as revealed to him in the teaching of Anaxagoras and Diogenes, had stirred his inmost depths; or he descants on the happiness and celebrates the civic virtues of their disciples. Anon, in verses of no less fire, he "spurns the crooked deceit of those who pry into the heavens," men whose "wicked tongue, a stranger to all true wisdom," denies that which is divine, and claims to know the unknowable. It is difficult to pierce through the maze of conflicting utterances to the underlying ground of common thought. But though difficult, it is not impossible. Euripides continues the ethical reformation of the gods begun by Æschylus. "If gods do evil, then they are not gods." This pithy sentence sums up his divinity. It contains the essence of all the objections and all the accusations which he never wearies of bringing forward against the traditional religion of his countrymen. For there is one point in which he differs entirely from his predecessors—from Sophocles as much as from Æschylus or Pindar. Each one of these was what in English political parlance is termed a "trimmer." They were continually endeavouring to pour the new wine into the old bottles. They rewrote the old myths in order to bring them into harmony with their own ethical and religious sentiments. They were at pains to eliminate all that seemed to them objectionable or unworthy of the gods. Euripides, who in general cannot be called naïve, follows, in this respect, the simpler and more direct procedure. He is much more faithful to tradition than his predecessors, and one is sometimes tempted to think that he deliberately avoids diminishing the openings presented to criticism by the popular beliefs. The truth is that he abandons the task of reconciliation as hopeless. There is too wide a gulf between tradition and his personal convictions. Instead of softening down the more repellent features of mythology, he reproduces them with exact fidelity, and assails the resulting picture of the gods with scathing censure and flat

contradiction. His audacity in this respect reminds us of Xenophanes, whom he further resembles in his unsparing attacks upon other fundamental points of Greek sentiment —the exaggerated appreciation of bodily excellences, and the idolatry lavished upon athletes victorious in the national games.

In Æschylus the tendency towards a more ethical conception of the gods was accompanied by faith and trust in them; in Euripides the same tendency was associated with wavering and doubt. He was convinced, indeed, that gods steeped in human passions and weaknesses were unworthy of adoration. But did ideally perfect gods —gods who *were* worthy of adoration—really exist or not? On this point he inclines, sometimes towards belief, sometimes towards doubt. In a certain passage, the boldest of all he ever wrote, or at all events of all that have come down to us, he raises, in all earnestness, the question whether Zeus is not identical with "natural necessity," or "the spirit of humanity." But he did not persist to the end in this attitude of doubt and of revolt against the religion of his countrymen. In the "Bacchæ," the product of his old age, he appears in an entirely new guise. He has now, one may say, grown weary of logical subtleties and petty criticism; the forces of mysticism, hitherto latent in his mind, have burst the bonds of restraining reason; henceforth he is entirely dominated by religion—a religion, we may add, which is completely divorced from ethics. We see the frenzied Mænads, with their ecstatic enthusiasms and the unbridled fervour of their cult of Dionysus, gaining the victory over the guardians of morality and the representatives of sober sense. It is as if the aged poet wished to make atonement for the apostasy of the national genius, to return to the peaceful worship of nature in which the play of feeling is untrammelled by reflexion. Nor is this attitude wholly foreign to his earlier works. In the "Hippolytus" Euripides paints the picture of a chaste, strenuously moral youth, whom he endows with features that recall the Orphic and Pythagorean Askesis. Aphrodite, to whom Hippolytus refuses all homage, hurls him to

destruction, by causing his stepmother Phædra first to be consumed by passionate love for him, and then, when he spurns her advances, to take a fearful vengeance. On which side are the poet's sympathies? We may be sure that his heart goes out in no small measure to the innocent, ill-starred youth. But in the fate of Hippolytus he sees more than the mere vengeance of a cruel goddess, jealously guarding her own prerogative. To his Hellenic mind the attempt of the youth to escape the universal dominion of love appears as a presumptuous defiance of nature's ordinance, which may not go unpunished. The words of warning and counsel which the poet puts in the mouth of the aged servant near the beginning of the drama leave no room for doubt on this head.

Still, in greatly preponderating measure, Euripides was a representative of the age of enlightenment and its most far-reaching claims. Again and again he entered the lists in defence of the equality of all human beings. It is not the privileges of noble birth alone that he attacks without ceasing. He has the courage to assail one of the pillars of society, the institution of slavery, and the theory on which it rests. He holds that, beyond the name, there is no difference between the bastard and the true born, no difference in nature, but only in convention, between bond and free (cf. Vol. I. p. 401, *seq.*). "In the breast of the despised serf there often beats a nobler heart than in that of his master." Thoughts such as these had possibly been already expressed by Hippias of Elis; he had at least paved the way for them by drawing his deep-going distinction between nature and convention. Similar sentiments will meet us again in the schools of the Socratics. It was long before the recognized leaders of thought acknowledged their justice. One might almost suppose that ancient society, founded as it was upon slavery, was led by the instinct of self-preservation to resist theories more subversive of it than any religious heresy.

Utterances such as those we have quoted must, we cannot but think, have come from the heart as well as from the head. We are justified in connecting them with the march of enlightenment, because here, as well as in

other matters, old prejudices had to be destroyed before new sentiments could begin to grow. For this growth the ground was cleared by the rationalistic movement. But this movement was not itself the soil in which the new plant throve and multiplied. We say multiplied, for it is in the highest degree improbable that such a change of feeling should have been confined to one or two persons. At Athens and elsewhere, democracy had levelled the differences between classes, and the levelling process was not one which could be summoned to halt at an arbitrarily chosen stage. The author of the treatise "On the Constitution of Athens," to which the reader's attention has only too often been directed (Vol. I. pp. 499, *sqq.*), can never sufficiently censure the audacity of the metics and slaves. And in so doing he lets fall by the way many a characteristic remark which for us is pregnant with inferences. The chief arm of Athens—her navy—required a great expenditure of money, which, he tells us, was partly supplied by contributions from metics and slaves. For this reason the state was obliged to concede many rights to these classes; the citizens, too, could not afford to be too niggardly in the matter of emancipations, with the result that, as a body, they had become the "slaves of the slaves." Another circumstance of great importance was the following: "If it were permissible to strike an unknown slave, metic, or freedman, there would be great danger of assaulting a free citizen unawares," so slight was the difference in point of dress and general appearance between the ordinary man and the members of these classes. It thus became the rule, we may add for our part, to treat with less brutality those members of society who had in former times been denied all rights, and the difference in treatment would naturally be followed by diminished brutality of sentiment. If we possessed the police records of that day, they would doubtless bear witness to a diminution in crimes of violence, the victims of which are supplied in greatest proportion by the less-protected strata of society, and at the same time a corresponding increase in those crimes which require cunning and a ready wit.

For it is an obvious conjecture that the growth of subtlety and inventive power, which resulted from the progress of dialectic and rhetoric, would naturally be accompanied by an increase in the abuse of these faculties. And this conjecture is only strengthened by the complaints of Euripides himself as to the baneful influence of "too fair speech," and the glibness which could veil every injustice, quite as much as by the dialogue between the personified just and unjust causes in the "Clouds" of Aristophanes. But any attempt to make a comparative estimate of the strength of the conflicting influences, to weigh the good against the evil, must be abandoned for lack of data.

There is the more reason to dwell on the humane tendency of the age of enlightenment, because in our day many have endeavoured to make this movement, together with the so-called "Sophistic school" and its supposed products, "extreme individualism" and "ethical materialism," responsible for all the excesses and all the horrors which were witnessed by the close of the fifth century. The baseless character of these charges is clear enough from the earlier parts of our exposition, and in what follows we shall often have occasion to return to the subject. But, apart from this, can any one imagine that in the periods which preceded the age of enlightenment men were any the less selfish or less brutal in their selfishness? Let it be noted that it was Hesiod, who was free from the least tendency to rationalism, that advised the farmer to make the wage-labourer "homeless," that is, turn him adrift on the high-road, when he had no further need for his services. Nor was it rationalism that moved the Attic patricians (or Eupatridæ) before Solon's time to thrust the mass of the people into serfdom, to leave them to drag out a miserable existence as "payers of the sixth," and to sell thousands of them as slaves into foreign countries. Nor was Theognis, who yearns for the return of the time when the submissive peasants of the rural districts wandered to and fro like frightened game, and were deprived of every share in political rights, a disciple of the sophists. That which really requires explanation is not the renewed outbreak and the violent

manifestations of the class-struggle in the course of the Peloponnesian war. On the contrary, the real question to be answered is—How did it come about that the conflict of classes which, up to the time of Clisthenes, had been waged, both in Greece at large and in Athens in particular, with so much bitterness, ceased almost entirely during the period from the end of the sixth to the middle of the fifth century, and even then, apart from isolated outbreaks, such as the murder of Ephialtes, wore a comparatively mild character up to the beginning of the Peloponnesian war?

To this question the true answer is probably as follows: Causes of different kinds, partly political, partly economic, combined to produce the same happy result. We may mention the splendid success of the Athenian empire; the growth of commerce and industry under the protection of its navy; the temporary ascendency of a middle class which had been slowly ripening for power; the better provision made for the material wants of the lower classes, and that too, in the first instance, without any merciless plundering of the allied states; and, not least, the legislation of Clisthenes himself and his immediate successors, deliberately aimed as it was at the extinction of class antipathies and the fusion of the different elements composing the state. There was also a psychological cause, the action of which, though not to be exaggerated, must have been felt for a few decades beyond the circle of Athenian predominance—the enhanced feeling of nationality due to the Persian war, a feeling which must have brought different classes as well as different states nearer to each other. This was the era of fruition in Greek as well as in Athenian history—a brief but extraordinarily fertile interval of rest between different phases of the class-struggle. We have already spoken of the economic changes which inflamed this struggle and occasioned its most acute paroxysms. If, on the other hand, Athenian ascendency assumed a more and more violent character, the cause is to be sought in the extreme susceptibility of Greek political sentiment, which could tolerate no subordination, even when defined and regulated

by law, of one state to another. Thus an unyielding temper on the part of the allies, and a disposition on the part of the predominant power to stretch its authority beyond constitutional limits, gave rise to an unhappy series of conflicts. Hence ensued various attempts at secession, to which the Peloponnesian war, with its varying fortunes, afforded special temptation; and these were always followed by punitive measures of great harshness, which it is very easy to regard as symptoms of moral degeneracy, and set down to the account of the age of enlightenment. But in order to form a correct judgment on these and other accusations, it is necessary to subject the international ethics of this and the immediately preceding period to an examination which need not be long, but promises to be fertile in more than one respect.

4. Greek international morality falls naturally into two sharply separated divisions, according as it concerned the relations of different Greek states to each other, or of Greeks to the outside "barbarian" world. In the latter case, self-interest was allowed practically uncontrolled sway; in the former, definite though elastic limits were recognized. That dominion over the barbaric races belonged to the Hellene as of right was never seriously called in question, often as individual barbarians might be credited with high human excellence. Even the poet of the age of enlightenment preaches this doctrine, possibly with some mental reservation which was certainly not shared by his public, in the words, "Let the alien serve the Hellene; they are bondmen, we are free." The conviction here expressed is one which reigned undisputed up to a comparatively late epoch. The practice of the Greeks, at any rate, in spite of isolated utterances in opposition to this doctrine, remained unaffected until the ground was cut away from it by the fusion of peoples accomplished by Alexander; the practice, both of states, which considered the pillage and enslavement of even the most innocent non-Greek communities as entirely justifiable, and the practice of individuals, whose outrages on barbarians often stood in the most glaring contrast with their conduct in

other relations. It is disconcerting to find the pious disciple of Socrates and the diligent student of ethics, Xenophon, wasting Thrace with fire and sword at the bidding of Seuthes. For a moment one is inclined to think that on this occasion Xenophon fell far below the level of the current morality of his day. But this impression is soon removed by the consideration that the writer, with his officer's sense of honour, is always concerned to exhibit his career in the best possible light, and that he cannot therefore in this connexion have been conscious of any offence against the prevailing moral ideas of his countrymen. A full generation later, no less a person than Aristotle affirms the entire lawfulness of slave-raids on barbarian tribes, as well as the wholesale reduction of them to the condition of serfs. He even goes so far as to recommend these practices in the interests of the barbarians themselves, on the ground of their being incapable of self-government. Civilization had made small progress in this quarter, if we except the above-mentioned humaner treatment of slaves. There is only one point in which we are able to observe any advance. According to the description in the "Iliad," one Greek hero after another stabs the fallen Hector with sword or spear, "None came nigh him that did not wound him." Against such wanton insult and mutilation of the dead many a vigorous protest was raised by the humaner sentiment of the fifth century; and these protests were uttered, not only by poets such as Moschion the tragedian, but also by the historian Herodotus, and, if the latter speaks truth, by the Spartan king Pausanias. The victor of Platæa is reported to have indignantly rejected the suggestion that he should avenge the ill-treatment of the dead Leonidas on the body of the Persian general Mardonius. Much more important progress was made in what has been fitly called "inter-Hellenic" ethics. This was due to the comparative slowness with which the consciousness of the unity of the Greek races developed. Homer appears hardly to know any collective name for the Hellenic nation. This is not the place to discuss in detail how the nation became aware

of its unity, how the common heritage of shrines, oracles, public games, works of literature, and finally, the wars waged in common against foreign enemies, fostered and strengthened the sense of nationality in the whole race. Nor shall we dwell here on the rise of numerous confederations, organized with varying degrees of closeness or laxity. The common interests of entire districts, the necessity of safeguarding navigation, the desire to protect from the changing fortunes of war certain of the more fundamental requisites of existence, were some of the motives which led to the formation of all kinds of combinations, which were placed under the guardianship of gods worshipped in common. Of these leagues of neighbouring states the most important historically, because of its long-continued, sometimes beneficial, sometimes disastrous activity, was the Amphictyonic, which centred in the shrine of Apollo at Delphi. The members of this league were not only united for the protection of the Delphic oracle, and the "Holy Land" appurtenant to it, by their oath to assist the god against any aggressor "with mouth, with hand, with foot, and with all their might." They were also sworn to set certain bounds to the exercise of the rights of war, such as not to deprive opponents of the use of well-water, and not to raze besieged cities to the ground. It is true that, in spite of these solemn oaths, the holy land itself became an apple of discord between the members of the confederacy, and that more than one "holy war" was waged for its possession. It is true also that complaints were raised, not without foundation, of bribes being accepted by the Pythia, and of the misuse of the Delphic oracle in the interests of particular states or parties, sometimes even for anti-national ends. But, broadly speaking, the priestly staff of the oracle deserved well of Greece, that land of many states, by its efforts in the cause of national unity. Not only the rights and obligations connected with religion, but such matters as the construction of roads, and even the calendar, were brought under uniform or nearly uniform regulations emanating from this source. Next to Delphi we must place Olympia.

The games celebrated there supplied more than one occasion for the profession of pan-Hellenic sentiment, and the "truce of God," which was associated with the festival, at least procured the neighbouring districts a temporary respite from warfare.

For, in general, war, unceasing war, was the watchword of Greek political life. The little nation was ever at feud with itself. The Persian general Mardonius, if we are to believe Herodotus, expressed, as well he might, his astonishment that the Greeks, "who spoke one language," did not prefer to settle their differences amicably, "by heralds and ambassadors," instead of invariably resorting to arms. It is easy to understand why the poet of enlightenment praised the blessings of peace with such fervour, and bewailed the unreason which ever kindled afresh the torch of war, until the weaker party was reduced to serfdom. And yet—so tortuous is the course of human development—we cannot rid ourselves of a sneaking doubt whether a Hellas blessed with perpetual peace, united in a confederacy, or possibly a single state, would ever have achieved so much in art and science as did that divided Hellas whose powers were braced, though at the same time all too soon exhausted, by the incessant competition of war. To pass by other historic parallels, the Italy of the Renaissance, which is the exactest counterpart we can find to the culminating period of Greek history, presents us with an entirely similar spectacle, equally depressing to the more short-sighted among the friends of humanity, and equally cheering to those who prize what is highest in human achievement. But, be that as it may, what the above-mentioned factors of national unity really effected was a toning down of the extreme brutalities of warfare. In the foreground we may place respect for death. It is true that even in the "Iliad" we find that to grant a truce for the burial of the dead is considered as a duty owed to universal humanity. But the poem as a whole contradicts this point of view, and we can only regard the isolated utterance as the addition of a later age. At the very beginning of the epic, the poet declares that the wrath of

Achilles will send many brave souls of heroes to the realms below, and give their bodies to be the prey of dogs and birds. In another passage we have the goddess Athene, the enemy of Troy, exclaiming, "Many a Trojan shall sate, with the flesh and the fat of his body, Dogs and birds, as he lies on the sand by the ships of Achæa." And the hero Diomedes exults with grim humour over the success of his javelin-throw ; his victim shall rot where he reddens the ground, and "birds, rather than women, shall flock round him." Again, the "Iliad" is full of combats waged round the bodies of the fallen heroes. The two armies endeavour, with all the force and endurance they possess, to wrest from each other, not the spoil merely, but the stripped bodies themselves. Even the story contained in the last book, in which a somewhat gentler spirit prevails, rests on the supposition that the acceptance of a ransom for a corpse is not the rule but the exception. It requires the intervention, the express command, of the supreme god, to make Achilles forego his designs upon the body of Hector. It is not till we come to the "Thebaïs," a poem of much later date, in which, too, Greeks fight with Greeks, not with barbarians, that we find an epic closing with the solemn burial of all the fallen combatants, by permission of the victor, left master of the field. From that time onward it was an unquestioned principle that not only should dead warriors be spared all mutilation, but also that they should not be denied the honour of funeral rites.

Nor was it in the interests of the dead alone that the feeling of common Hellenism asserted itself. The victor was required to spare the life and liberty of the vanquished. But this protection did not extend to their goods. Whether, and to what extent, the rights of property should be respected, what, in general terms, the fate of the defeated side was to be, depended on the nature of the war, the magnitude of the victory, and partly on the character of the vanquished party. The entire destruction, root and branch, of a Greek community was seldom attempted, and never with success ; such attempts, moreover, were only made under cover of special circumstances, which were

seldom considered sufficient justification. But the expulsion of the conquered population, and the partition of its land, as well as the reduction of independent proprietors to the status of tributary peasants, are measures which not only were put in actual practice by Greeks engaged in warfare against other Greeks, but were not even regarded as exceeding the limits prescribed by the laws of war, though in the great majority of cases the victors were satisfied with a much smaller disturbance of existing conditions. But that butchery of prisoners which in the Homeric poems is considered "fitting," though often omitted, passed, in historical times at least, as inadmissible between Greeks. Nor might Greek cities be subjected to the terrible fate described in the "Iliad:" "Flames devour the city, the men are slain by the sword-point, Children are carried away, and with them the low-girded women." Exceptions to the rule of mercy are certainly not unknown, but they are few in number, and may generally be explained, if not justified, by special circumstances. The Thebans, who claimed to be the rightful lords of Bœotia, or, at least, that their city was its natural capital, showed no pity to prisoners of war who were natives of other Bœotian cities. The Syracusans considered the interference of Athens in the affairs of Sicily a grievous wrong, and, after their brilliant victory over the intruders, sent thousands of them to die in the quarries, where nominally they were held prisoners, but in reality perished miserably of starvation, exposure, and over-crowding. Nor did Athens preserve an unstained record under the stress and strain of the Peloponnesian war. After the capture of Torone, a city which had seceded from the Athenian confederation, the women and children were sold into slavery; the men, however, who had been brought prisoners to Athens, and, at the close of the war, ransomed or exchanged, were spared the extreme penalty. Scione, another seceding city, fared worse. Here the enslavement of the women and children was accompanied by the slaughter of the men, and the division of the land, which was given by the Athenians to refugees from Platæa. This city had five years previously (427) been taken, after a

tedious siege, by the Spartans, who, under pressure from the Thebans, had punished it for its infidelity to their cause by the enslavement of the women, the execution of the surviving combatants, and the complete destruction of the walls and buildings. The similar treatment of Melos by the Athenians appears all the more revolting when we consider the previous history of the island. Originally a Spartan colony, it had been long autonomous, and was guilty of no breach of loyalty to the confederation. More than that, it had taken no part whatever in the war, and only took arms on being summoned by the Athenians to abandon the neutrality it had hitherto (till 416) observed. This violation of a neutral state is not without modern parallels —we may mention the English bombardment of Copenhagen in 1807—and it does not differ in principle from the treatment accorded to neutral merchantmen by the Spartans in the same war. They made prizes of such ships whenever their interests required it, and often cruelly murdered the captains. But what are we to think of the characteristic description given by Thucydides of the proceedings at Melos? In that famous dialogue he makes the representatives of Athens state the policy of force followed by their country in language of brutal plainness, without the least attempt at concealment or palliation. Some few readers have been simple enough to take for a faithful report of actual diplomatic negotiations what is really a profound disquisition on the law of nature, introduced by the author in connexion with this episode. Other critics, both ancient and modern, have supposed that Thucydides wished to pillory the lawless and reckless procedure of the contemporary political leaders of Athens. We cannot accept this view, though it is supported by the authority of Grote. In these speeches the Athenian delegates scornfully reject prophecies and oracles, and treat the theological interpretation of history with at best cool scepticism. This attitude, however, is one to which Thucydides was himself inclined; how can he have intended to bring it into discredit? Further, the delegates exhibit a great disdain for fine phrases and traditional tags (*e.g.* "We Athenians will use

no fine words ; we will not go out of our way to prove at length that we have a right to rule, because we overthrew the Persians" *). This blunt political realism ought surely to be taken as an expression of Thucydides's own opinions rather than as the target of his satire. He certainly cannot have meant to imply that the Athenians would really have done better if they had adorned their case with the flowers of rhetoric, or had veiled what was in truth a question of might by hypocritical allegations of legal claims. Our impression is that the historian has here allowed himself to be guided by his zeal for truth, his honest hatred of cant, and his keen political insight ; that he has endeavoured to go straight to the heart of the matter, and show with unadorned plainness that the essential and decisive factors in international relations are the interests and the comparative strength of states. This view, that his purpose was scientific rather than controversial, is supported by the cool, unemotional tone in which he records the final catastrophe.

This coolness of tone is a personal characteristic of the historian, with his pride of intellect and his sometimes violent repression of every ordinary feeling of humanity, and is not shared by him with the Athenian people. This latter may be compared to a man of not ungenerous though highly irascible temper. The Athenians were very ready to listen to the suggestions of passion, but their real humanity of disposition is shown by the fact that, even when their fury was aroused, or when their vital interests were at stake, they were not obstinately deaf to the voice of repentance and forgiveness. In the same year in which the Spartans vented their rage on the unfortunate Platæans, a similar bloodthirsty sentence was passed by the Athenians on the inhabitants of Mitylene in Lesbos, a city which had broken faith with the confederation. It was resolved that all capable of bearing arms should be put to death, and that the women and children should be sold into slavery. But a wholesome revulsion of feeling soon followed. The horrible decree was rescinded by a fresh vote of the people,

* Thuc., v. 89, trans. Jowett.

and a crew of fast oarsmen despatched to carry the happy tidings to its destination with all the speed at their command. That even the mitigated sentence was excessive, judging by modern standards—more than a thousand of the most guilty among the rebels were still marked out for the death-penalty—is an admission which it is sad to have to make, but one which does not alter the fact that among the Greeks none but the Athenians showed themselves capable of any such revulsion of feeling. On the other hand, they were incapable of the cruel deceit of the Spartans, who inveigled two thousand of the most honourable and ambitious of their Helots into a trap, under the pretext of offering them freedom.

But however often the noble heart of the Athenian people might obey a generous impulse, it was not by such impulses that its policy was determined, but by the well or ill understood interest of the state. It was an example of Athenian generosity when, at the end of the civil disorder which marked the closing years of the fifth century, an all but general amnesty was granted to the oligarchical insurgents, and faithfully adhered to in spite of many incitements to the contrary. The humanity of the people was shown in the manifold provision made by law for the protection of the weak. Among the many enactments of this character we may note the assistance granted by the state to men who were unable to earn a livelihood, the right accorded to wives (or at least a particular class of them) of taking legal action against husbands who ill treated them, and the provision made for widows and orphans—in particular the education at the expense of the state of the orphans of men who had fallen in battle. In the Homeric age no sadder lot was known than that of such orphans. Their food was the crumbs from the men's table, and their drink that "which wets the lips, but leaves the throat dry." Even the slave was not, at Athens, wholly destitute of legal protection. As a resource against gross ill treatment on his master's part, he might take refuge in the shrine of Theseus, where, in case his grievance proved to be well founded, he might demand to be sold to

a new master. A similar procedure was allowed in various other Greek states. And even the inter-Hellenic policy of Athens was not entirely unaffected by altruistic motives. The defence of the weak is a favourite subject with the Attic orators and dramatists. Whenever the interests of the state were in harmony with this sentiment, it played a large part in the utterances of practical politicians. A charge of hypocrisy would be out of place here, as much as in the case of modern England, where a strong and genuine enthusiasm for the liberty of foreign peoples exists and lends vigour and warmth to a policy based on interest with which it may happen to agree ; although in other cases the interests of England seem to be invested with the dignity of an ethical principle. He who follows the varying phases of Athenian politics will not fail to notice that the appeal to law and morality becomes louder and more frequent in proportion as the power of the state suffers diminution. There is a kind of see-saw ; when one end is up, the other is down. What on one occasion is extolled as a sacred tradition, as a precious legacy from the men of old, is, in different circumstances, mocked at as a "weak-kneed humanitarian pose."

He who, in the face of these and kindred phenomena, should doubt the possibility of moral progress in international relations, would be under a mistake. Community of sentiment does not generally precede, but follow, community of interest. Humanizing influences of all kinds may at times gain enormous strength, but they can never triumph over the self-preserving instinct of a nation or a political organism. Further, the prospects of progress in this direction were never brighter than at the present moment. No doubt it is easy to be led astray, on a superficial view of the case, by the spectacle of the great wars of the last generation. But, if we may be allowed the expression, they were, almost without exception, pacific wars. Their effect was to win, or to secure, internal peace for regions of vast extent. In Europe, two great states, with a combined population of eighty millions, have taken the place of politically divided nationalities ; and in America

the giant Union has been saved from threatened disruption. These facts alone are elements of no mean consequence in the progress of the cause of peace, and further developments tending in the same direction are not impossible. They are to be expected as results of that solidarity of interests affecting, perhaps not the entire world, but large combinations of states, which is bound to increase in proportion as a more perfect division of labour and facilitated means of intercourse create larger and larger spheres of common economic activity, and establish closer and closer relations between the more widely separated portions of the globe. More and more often will it be found that hostilities between a particular pair of states involve so much injury to one or more other states that the latter are compelled to prevent the conflict by a threat of intervention, and to insist on a peaceful solution of the question at issue. A threat of this kind might easily acquire a character of permanency ; moreover, the solution adopted would naturally be on lines dictated by considerations of the general welfare. We should thus attain the nearest approximation to the reign of international law and morality which appears compatible with the necessary division of humanity into a number of independent and autonomous states.

But we must return to the much-subdivided Greece of bygone days, whose productive energies were perhaps all the greater because of its subdivision. Or rather, our subject will now be the intellectual capital of Greece, a part which, in virtue of its great and growing importance, we have already found tending to usurp in our exposition the place of the whole. But now that our story promises to linger by the banks of the Ilissus, and beneath the citadel-rock of the virgin-goddess, it is fitting that we should endeavour to give the reader some familiarity with the features of the land and its people, and to bring before his mind the peculiar characteristics of the "school of Greece."

CHAPTER II.

ATHENS AND THE ATHENIANS.

1. THERE is one thing which even the gloomy doubter, Euripides, never called in question, and that is the grandeur of his native city. His tongue never wearies of praising the "violet-crowned, glorious" Athens, the "sons of Erechtheus, sprung from the blessed gods." bathed in "dazzling ether," and the "holy land" in which they lived. And now, after more than two thousand years, his song still wakes an echo. "How poor," we exclaim, "would mankind be now if Athens had never been!" Let us endeavour to give some modest account of the causes, or rather of some of the conditions, of that unexampled intellectual splendour whose seat this favoured spot of earth once was.

Athens was the heiress of Miletus. There was, indeed, little rejoicing when she entered into possession. When the tragedian Phrynichus, the predecessor of Æschylus, put on the Athenian stage his "Capture of Miletus," in which he had dramatized the reconquest of that city by the Persians after the Ionian revolt (494), the rows of spectators were thrilled with such deep emotion that the reproduction of the piece was forbidden, and the author of the too effective play punished by a fine. And yet it was precisely the ruin of Ionia that made Athens the predominant power in Greece, and the fall of Miletus that raised her to the position of intellectual capital. The scope of our inquiry is thus somewhat narrowed. We shall not attempt to prove that Athens must, in any case,

have risen to the height she did. All we can hope to do is to explain how it was possible for her to climb to an eminence from which her rival had descended.

All the circumstances which we have mentioned in the first volume (p. 4, *seq.*) as favourable to Greek civilization, were found in full—indeed, in exceptional measure—in Attica. This region, the most eastern of the Greek mainland, turns its back on the meagre civilizations of the North and West, and stretches out yearning arms, as it were, to the ancient culture of the East. Standing at its southern apex, say on the steps of the glistening temple of Athene at Cape Sunium, one sees the island of Ceos, the first link of an almost continuous chain stretching away towards the Asiatic coast. In Attica, again, the most diverse callings were followed, and the utmost variety of characters and aptitudes collected together within a small area. The agricultural inhabitants of the lowlands contrasted with the pastoral folk of the hills and the sailors and fishermen of the long coast-line. These three groups of the population formed, in the sixth century, three distinct factions or parties in local politics, taking their names from the "Plain," the "Mountain," and the "Coast." The inhabitants of Attica considered themselves as autochthonous, that is, as being originally sprung from the soil. From this expression we are to conclude that they had been established in the district for long ages, and that the indigenous population had not been expelled or reduced to serfdom by foreign conquerors. The Doric migration, which swept over the other parts of Greece like a tidal wave, left Attica untouched; and the continuously progressive development which was thus rendered possible for the young commonwealth had as happy an influence on its after-history as a boyhood spent in quiet growth has upon the subsequent career of a man. Nor was there any lack of safeguards against the corresponding dangers of torpor and provincial stagnation. Perpetual border feuds kept the energies of the people in constant exercise, while the naturally unfertile soil of Attica both demanded and richly rewarded strenuous labour. Nor could they

resist the peremptory invitation to be diligent in trade and navigation, in professions and industries, which was conveyed to them by the voice of the restless sea beating upon their shores. The population belonged to the intellectually most active division of the Greek race—the Ionic. But the Bœotians, on the north of the little territory, were of Æolian, the Megarians, on the west, of Doric extraction. It was impossible that Attica should wholly escape the influence of such neighbourhood. Just as the Attic dialect formed a connecting link between the other varieties of Ionic speech on the one hand, and the Doric and Æolian idioms on the other, so, in point of architecture, dress, and education, Athenian culture has more than one feature in common with the non-Ionic, especially the Doric branches. Fragments of foreign nationalities, too, were not wanting, such as the Phœnicians in the neighbouring island of Salamis, and in Melite; Thracians in Eleusis; while one family of high repute traced its pedigree back to Carian ancestors; and princely houses, such as that of the Nelidæ or the Æacidæ, who had been expelled from other parts of Greece, chose Athens for their home. It must be remembered that the city was famous in every age for its hospitality both to the men and the gods of other lands. Everything thus conspired to favour a many-sided development of the Athenian people, and to save them from dull uniformity of character. This harmonizes with the natural diversity of the landscape. To quote Ernst Curtius, "Half an hour's walk brings us from the shade of the olive-grove to the harbour, where we seem to have entered a totally different country."

The Ionians of Asia Minor were marked by a certain Oriental luxuriousness of temperament which was foreign to the Athenians. Nor did the latter at first display the same resolute spirit of enterprise, the same romantic passion for adventure, as their Asiatic kinsmen. We do not find the Athenians of the seventh and sixth centuries taking service under Egyptian kings, as did the Milesians, or penetrating to the oases of the Sahara like the Samians. Herewith is closely bound up much that proved of

advantage to the little commonwealth, the astonishing continuity of whose development comes home to us with greater and greater force the more intimately we become acquainted with its history. This development was no doubt retarded by the severity of the class-struggle, but its character was not thereby altered. The primitive monarchy passed almost insensibly into the aristocratic system of government which succeeded it, and this stage was followed by an equally progressive enlargement of the area of political rights, leading, by a series of easy transitions, in which scarcely a step was omitted, to the ultimate triumph of the democracy. And, even then, the old patrician families retained their social consideration long after their political privileges had become extinct. Among the many beneficial effects of this gradual development there is one which deserves special mention. In the best ages of Athenian history there was no feverish race for wealth, and therefore no plutocracy. One advantage of hereditary monarchy is that it protects the supreme position in the state from the intrigues of ambitious place-hunters. An hereditary aristocracy sometimes renders a similar service to a community by barring the highest social status to the sordid competition of greedy money-hunters. A healthier-toned tradition is thus rendered possible, inequalities between man and man are robbed of their sting, and some guarantee is afforded against depreciation of the higher moral and intellectual interests of society.

2. The phenomenon with which we are now mainly concerned, the intellectual greatness of Athens, is one which it is not possible to trace to its ultimate causes. Instead of indulging in empty hypotheses, we prefer to adduce a few facts which may conceivably have favoured that blaze of splendour. For this purpose we must go back a little. At Miletus, science was originally the handmaid of utility. The navigation which centred in the great emporium necessitated the development of astronomical and mathematical knowledge, and on this trunk the scion of cosmological speculation was afterwards

grafted. At Athens, on the other hand, art had taken firm root long before the first beginnings of scientific research. Many circumstances combined to foster the growth of art in connexion with handicrafts. The meagre yield of the soil required supplementing by the earnings of industry, and for this very reason Pisistratus and Solon encouraged the introduction of foreign craftsmen. Lastly, the locality furnished an abundant supply of the raw materials of art. The designer and painter of vases found the finest pottery-earth ready to his hand, and rich marble-quarries were at the disposal of the sculptor and the architect. The ancients held firmly, and no doubt rightly, that where the light is intensest and the atmosphere purest, there the senses attain their highest degree of keenness and refinement. Another feature of the Attic climate which once was the subject of enthusiastic praise, has now undergone a change for the worse. That extent and variety of vegetation which prompted the boast of Aristophanes that in his country "all fruits and all herbs throve" at all times, almost obliterating the difference between the seasons, does not now exist in the same measure. For the destruction of the forests has brought in its train a surprising decrease in the rainfall, and a corresponding aggravation of the plague of dust. But in another respect, Attica is still a highly favoured region. There are not two days in the year during which the sun remains invisible, and brilliant summer weather prevails for nearly half the year. Ernst Curtius tells us that the "produce of this soil is to-day more delicate, finer, and more aromatic," and "that the fruits of Attic orchards and gardens have a better flavour than those of other lands;" further, that "no hills in Greece yield more fragrant herbs than Hymettus, the bee-pasture of ancient renown." Did the same natural influences produce a corresponding refinement in the human race? We cannot tell. So much is certain, that the shrewdness of the Athenians, the contrast which the clarity of their intellect presented to all "foolish simplicity," the general mental superiority which distinguished them from other Greeks as Greeks were distinguished from barbarians, were universally

acknowledged facts, and were mentioned by Herodotus as being such even in his day.

Science and Art are twin sisters, in spite of their occasional estrangements. Both are to a large measure founded on the gift of exact observation. This, for its part, has its root in exceptional delicacy of the senses. Where we receive *one* impression, as is remarked by a profound French thinker to whom we are indebted for many of the following thoughts, the Greek received twenty, each one of which set in lively vibration a sympathetic chord of emotion. To this cause we may also attribute that sense of measure, that abhorrence of all extravagance, that economic use of the means of expression, which distinguished the art, as well as the life and ideals of the Greeks. Here also, since the sharply defined and at the same time emotionally accentuated impression is always the most permanent, we have the source of the increased capacity of the Greek for faithfully reproducing past impressions, whether received simultaneously or in succession, whether it was the chisel or the pencil that sought to give them final embodiment in form and colour, or whether it was the artist in language who endeavoured to revive them by the aid of sounds, words, and phrases, by the rhythm of oratory or of verse. The numerous picturesque passages of the Homeric poems, especially the "Iliad," the graphic delineations of diseases left us by the physicians of the Hippocratic school, the masterpieces of sculpture, and the wonderfully vivid word-paintings of the historians Herodotus and Thucydides, may all be regarded as offshoots of a single parent stem. Even in those branches of art in which there is no attempt at imitation—in music, for example, and architecture—the peculiar susceptibility of the Greeks to all kinds of sense-impression manifests itself at every turn. Their musical scale was not limited to tones and semi-tones like ours, but possessed quarter-tones as well. Their architecture exhibits a minute differentiation of parts which extends to the smallest details; thus in the fluted columns of the Parthenon each single groove is cut more deeply towards its extremities than in the middle of

its length. For the Greeks, with their exceptionally keen and active senses, employed in the execution of their works of creative genius many artifices which easily elude our duller perceptions, and only reveal themselves as the reward of the most painstaking and careful analysis. The architecture, whether of a material fabric like the Parthenon, or of a fabric built of words and rhythms such as any choral ode in a Greek play, requires for its understanding a minute dissection which is often beyond the unaided powers of eye or ear. For all the excellences which distinguished the Greek race belong in a special measure to the Ionians, and above all the Athenians.

The common root of artistic and scientific excellence now lies bare before us. It is not difficult to trace the two-fold course of development, which is in essence but a single one, leading from the lower to the higher stages of both. On the artistic side we see that the conditions of success are distinct separation of parts, lucid arrangement of the whole, strict correspondence of form to matter, of organ to function. On the intellectual side the prime requisites are distinctness of mental vision, systematic arrangement of subject-matter, sharply defined logical division. For where individual perceptions are marked by great clearness and definiteness, it is impossible that a desire should not be awakened to preserve the syntheses of sense, as well as their mental copies, from becoming clouded or confused. There can be no comfort or joy in the acquisition of a vast stock of mental furniture, unless it be carefully and competently arranged and classified. We have here the source of one of the two main streams of scientific thought, the analytic method. It seems more difficult to trace the origin of the other stream, the deductive method, that is, to establish a connexion between that impulse towards the highest achievements of science which first appeared among the Ionians, and the other manifestations of Ionian character. For the gay holiday temperament of the Ionian, with his delight in colour and brilliance, his contented enjoyment of all that stimulates and satisfies eye or ear, seems to be separated by a wide gulf from all striving

after scientific rigour, all pursuit of cold and colourless abstractions, such as the "infinite" of Anaximander. But the contradiction is only apparent. Abstraction has its origin in a craving for simplicity and universality which is really a craving for relief. If the mind is not to be overburdened by the multiplicity of images, they must be referred to the fewest and the simplest possible concepts. Only thus can the manifold detail of treasured impressions be temporarily dismissed from consciousness with no impairment of the sense of possession, and with full confidence in the power of ready reproduction. Thus the act of abstraction, by easing the mind of its load, imparts to it a feeling of lightness and freedom. In spite of the plausibility of the contrary view, the spirit of the deductive method is in its origin closely akin to sensuous delight in the richness and variety of external objects. It must be conceded that the evolution of the different branches of science brings about a separation between the two, and that it was the Doric, not the Ionic, race that most successfully studied the abstractions of number and measure. The two tendencies we have described unite in producing what we may call the systematic intellect, by which we mean that type of intellect which is never content with isolated facts as such, and refuses to accept or register them except as parts of a well-ordered, well-articulated structure, or *σύστημα*. Herein we may see at once the great strength and the great weakness of Greek thought, the source both of the most brilliant triumphs of research and of not a few hasty and erroneous generalizations. The inquiring mind easily becomes entangled in the meshes of the net in which it seeks to imprison the multitude of facts. And here we may refer to the history of that twin sister to Science—Art—whose arrested development is held by the best judges to be in part due to the influence of system, to the love of rules, to the premature imposition of rigid canons. We are now, however, concerned, not with the shadow but with the blaze of light by which it was cast. Let us follow the tendency we are considering to another of its results. Mastery over the subject-matter of knowledge,

theory, was associated with the endeavour to bring the world of practice in its turn into subjection to supreme, all-embracing principles. We shall soon have before us the man who strove for the attainment of this aim with all the fervour of an intense enthusiasm.

3. Hitherto we have spoken of the Ionians and of the Athenians as if they were aggregates of uniformly endowed and similarly constituted humanity. This procedure is a necessity wherever it is attempted to bring out the common element in racial or national character, but it is apt, and nowhere more so than in the present instance, to suggest false conclusions. For variety of individual development is perhaps the most distinctive feature of Athenian culture. Hence the originality, the wealth of versatile genius, by which the age of Athenian splendour was characterized. Never since those days has there been so complete a fulfilment of the conditions laid down by Wilhelm von Humboldt, and after him by John Stuart Mill. Nowhere else have that "freedom" and that "variety of situations" of which "individual vigour" and "manifold diversity of character" are the outcome, been presented in the same ample measure. It was early recognized to what extent Athenian greatness was promoted by the reconquest and the progressive development of political liberty.

"Not in one instance only, but everywhere alike, equality of rights proves how excellent a thing it is. Do we not see that the Athenians, so long as they were subject to the rule of tyrants, were not superior in war to any of their neighbours? But once they had rid themselves of that rule, they took by far the foremost position."

This dictum of Herodotus * may perhaps be chargeable with exaggeration in regard to the political power of Athens, which certainly gained something from the shrewd statesmanship of Pisistratus, but in the sphere of intellectual evolution it is nothing but the exact truth.

Current terms, such as "liberty" or "democracy," give us but an imperfect picture of the workings of the Athenian constitution. What was most essential and vital in it was

* V. 78.

not the assembling of the entire male population at the Pnyx, to pass by a majority of votes resolutions by which the state was governed. A more important feature, one which had existed long before the rise of democracy, was the extraordinarily minute articulation of the body politic, by which we are reminded of the marvellously delicate organisms revealed to us by the microscope. From the family as smallest unit, to the largest, the state, there extended a widening series of associations, circle after circle. The "household," the "clan," the "brotherhood," the "tribe," each of these corporations united its members in common labour, common worship, common festival; everywhere was joyous co-operation and strenuous rivalry—rivalry that blessed the whole by promoting the well-being of the parts. The reform of Clisthenes did not materially change the situation. By a singularly ingenious artifice he partially replaced the ties of kinship by the ties of neighbourhood, superposing the "tribe" on the "township," and thereby effecting a happy fusion of two conflicting principles by a compromise which went far to obviate the drawbacks and emphasize the advantages of both. The unitary principle which thus triumphed at once over local separatism and the exclusive caste system of the noble and patrician families, was far from being a hard and rigid scheme of centralization, tending to absorb in itself all the vitality of the smaller divisions. It was the exact opposite of this. The community was now more richly organized than ever. Vigorous, pulsating life, adequate on the emotional as well as on the practical side, permeated every part of the social organism. Community of worship and community of interests held together in the bonds of union the members both of the greater and of the lesser corporations. The co-proprietorship of shrines, of burial-places, of land, libraries, and so forth, brought men into close contact with each other, and diffused among them that wholesome warmth of kindly feeling, akin to family affection, which the Ionians in general and the Athenians in particular deemed a necessary element in public as well as in private life. But, the reader will exclaim in surprise, where in all

this is the individual, his freedom, his independent development? Are not all these associations so many checks and hindrances, so many means of restricting and curtailing individual life in the interest of the community? The aptest answer to this question is supplied by a comparison of Athens with Sparta. In the latter city the unremitting tension of military organization stunted, if it did not destroy, the associations based on ties of kinship. Even family life, in the narrow sense, lost the greater part of its significance. The state took over the whole responsibility of the education of the boys. The home of the youth, even of the young husband, was the barracks. Even men of mature years took their meals, not in the family circle, but in the Syssition, that is, a kind of camp-fellowship or mess, kept up even in time of peace. The organization of the community was almost entirely on military lines. Associations intermediate between the state and the individual were either lacking or had become mere expedients of mechanical subdivision. And what were the consequences? The citizen, trained to no efficiency except such as served state purposes, animated by a supreme but exclusive devotion to his country, exhibited a minimum of individual character, perhaps less than a minimum of active interest in science and art. At Athens we find the exact opposite of this. The difference justifies us in saying that all these intermediate associations were so many protective integuments within which individual character, diversity, and originality were enabled to grow and thrive. It is superfluous to add that the permanent existence and the wholesome operation of political liberty depend upon its being supported by a broadening series of self-governing units, without which foundation freedom must either decay or degenerate into a tyranny of the majority, beneath which individual liberty is crushed.

From all such tyranny of the majority Athens was remarkably exempt. That this was a priceless blessing and one of the chief causes of Athenian greatness, is no modern discovery. It was recognized by Thucydides, and by Pericles too, if we may believe the main thoughts of

the funeral oration to be really those of the statesman, and not merely put in his mouth by the historian.

The terse, pregnant sentences of this memorable speech contain a panegyric of the Athenian political system, as a system which leaves unused no force capable of serving the common welfare, which, in this respect at least, admits no privilege of class, and is prompt to recognize and reward all merit, without regard to riches or rank. And the same liberal spirit animates men's judgments on each other in private matters. No one is offended with his neighbour for ordering his life as seems best to him, or seeks to embitter his existence by sour glances and all the petty persecutions of intolerance. Life with them is bright and joyous, free from all the vexation that comes of a fretful spirit.

"We are lovers of the beautiful, yet simple in our tastes, and we cultivate the mind without loss of manliness. Wealth we employ, not for talk and ostentation, but when there is a real use for it. To avow poverty with us is no disgrace; the true disgrace is in doing nothing to avoid it. An Athenian citizen does not neglect the state because he takes care of his own household; and even those of us who are engaged in business have a very fair idea of politics. We alone regard a man who takes no interest in public affairs, not as a harmless, but as a useless member of society."

Finally, it is pointed out that "Athens is the school of Hellas, and the individual Athenian in his own person seems to have the power of adapting himself to the most varied forms of action with the utmost versatility and grace,"* instead of being content to remain a mere fraction of a man.

Who can doubt that the society thus described by Pericles was a soil admirably fitted for the growth of genius and originality? The less we are burdened and cramped by the rigid fetters of precise conventionalism, and the more we are accustomed, within the limits of a due regard to others' welfare and our own soul's health, to

* Thuc., ii. 40, 41, trans. Jowett.

listen to the voice and follow the impulses of our own nature instead of slavishly aping a set copy, the better prospect shall we have of living out our lives in happy activity, of preserving uncorrupted and developing to its full stature any germ of talent that may lie dormant within our bosoms. The spontaneous play of thought and emotion, the free swift current of ideas, not checked or interrupted by any rift within the soul, will then bear us on to the greatest we have it in us to achieve. This, no doubt, is applicable chiefly to those who are engaged in the work of scientific or artistic production. But the number of those who are thus occupied must of necessity be largest where all aptitudes are not forced into one and the same political or social mould, and thereby partly deformed, partly stunted. And where many rich and highly developed individualities, of more than average endowments, stand out from the mass, it will be hard if more new sources of beauty are not detected, and more new modes of producing it invented, above all, if more new truths are not discovered, there than elsewhere. One pair of eyes sees less than many. And this is more especially true when the many eyes are of many types, when their several excellences and defects compensate each other, when the point of clearest vision is for some the immediate foreground, for others the distant horizon, while others again are best adapted for the greatest possible number of intermediate ranges.

4. We have mentioned some of the internal causes which favoured the intellectual productivity of the little land and people—no larger than Luxemburg or Vorarlberg—but external causes were not wanting which contributed their share towards the same wonderful result. One consequence of the triumphant issue of the Persian war was that a considerable accession of material wealth fell to the lot of Athens, now the mistress of the seas and the heiress of those Ionian centres of commerce and industry which had been severed from their hinterland. Athens thus became the capital of a confederation, or rather empire, which embraced the whole eastern half of the Greek world. Whatever talent or intellect was to be found among the

confederate, or subject, states, flowed in a mighty stream to the great metropolis. And thus the character of the Athenians themselves underwent a remarkable change. The primitive, easy-going humour of early Athens had now disappeared to the last trace, in consequence, partly of increased power, partly of closer contact with the Ionians of Asia Minor, and had been replaced by that vaulting ambition and enterprising audacity, that joyous and hopeful energy, which had once been distinctive of Miletus, and now found a home in the new capital. Athens became more Ionian than it had formerly been. Alas! the evil genius of Ionia was not long idle. Powers strung to their highest tension were soon overwrought; the height of splendour was soon followed by the beginnings of decay. Two causes combined to produce this effect. On the one hand, there was the passionate thirst of power, which thought no aim too high, which regarded all past success as nothing so long as anything still remained unachieved, which, in the words of Thucydides, "saw in every omitted undertaking an advantage lost," and but seldom took the chances of failure into serious account. On the other hand, there was the peculiar character of the Athenian political organization, which was far better adapted to develop the powers of a moderate-sized community than to restrain a mighty state to the paths of peace and security. If we may speak of political institutions as a kind of machinery whose component parts are groups of humanity, and in the last resort, individual men, the excellence of the Athenian constitutional apparatus lay chiefly in the action and reaction between the whole and the parts, rather than in its total efficiency for the task it was intended to perform. In particular, those institutions were quite incapable of conducting a foreign policy conceived on the grand scale —a task to which, judging from all hitherto recorded experience, it is chiefly monarchies and aristocracies that have shown themselves equal; democracies only when a rare stroke of luck has placed at their head a Cromwell or a Pericles, and when, to use again the language of Thucydides, "only the name of democracy remains; in

reality a single man is supreme." But we, to whom the political destinies of Athens are a matter of secondary interest, may be permitted to linger over the age of splendour and the brilliant achievements of its sons, untroubled by the gathering clouds. We turn to the study of one of the greatest personalities of that day—the intellectual ancestor of an illustrious line of offspring.

CHAPTER III.

THE LIFE AND WORK OF SOCRATES.

1. ALL centuries have produced their quota of strong, clear, cool heads; and there has rarely been any lack of warm hearts. But the two are rarely combined, and the rarest phenomenon of all is a heart of mighty power working with all its force to keep the head above it cool, as a steam-engine may give motion to a refrigerating machine. Such a combination occurs but once in a millennium on any large scale. But when it does occur, it exerts, as if to compensate for its rarity, an influence which persists unexhausted for a long train of centuries. The rarity of this phenomenon is due to a fundamental peculiarity of human nature. All enthusiasm, as such, tends rather to obscurity than to clearness of mental vision. The same, indeed, is the effect of emotion in general. Every emotion attracts those ideas and images which nourish it, and repels those which do not. To perceive and judge of facts with an open unbiassed mind is impossible except where impartiality, that is, freedom from emotion, has first paved the way. Benjamin Franklin has been called an "enthusiast of sobriety." The term is applicable in far higher measure to Socrates. The passion which dominated his powerful personality, the cause for which he was eager to suffer martyrdom, was the attainment of intellectual clearness. He thirsted for pure concepts as ardently as any mystic ever panted for union with the Godhead. The impulse he gave called into existence numerous schools, or rather sects, of moral philosophers, in which myriads of educated men have found a

substitute for decaying popular religions. To take the true measure of this prodigious historical phenomenon is one of the most important tasks with which this work is occupied.

Socrates was the son of the sculptor Sophroniscus, and was born at Athens in the year 469 B.C., or a little earlier. In his youth he learnt his father's craft, and down to a late antiquity a group representing the Graces was exhibited on the Acropolis as his work. Possibly this may be identical with a relief executed in the style of that period, which has been found in that situation. However that may be, Socrates soon renounced art in order to devote the remainder of his life exclusively to speculation. He neglected his household, and this doubtless contributed to make his marriage with Xanthippe, by whom he had three sons, anything but a source of happiness. He is said to have been won for philosophy by a disciple of Anaxagoras, Archelaus, whose acquaintance the reader has already made (cf. Vol. I. pp. 377, 402), with whom he lived for a time in Samos, on terms of intimate friendship. The authority for this statement is contained in the "Pilgrimage" of the tragedian Ion of Chios—a trustworthy and disinterested witness, whose testimony we have no serious ground for calling in question. Besides, we know that the conception of end or purpose, which played so important a part in the thought of Socrates, dominated the system of Anaxagoras more than that of any of the other nature-philosophers, while, among the Anaxagoreans, it was precisely Archelaus who to the investigation of nature added some study of the problems of human life. He was thus the very teacher to awaken the speculative impulse in the man who was destined, as Cicero says, to bring philosophy down from heaven to earth, that is, to substitute man for the universe as a subject of inquiry. Something like a vicious circle may surely be laid to the charge of those critics who first reject contemporary evidence, which not even Theophrastus impugns, and then brush away quite independent testimony to the ethical investigations of Archelaus with the remark that a philosopher without

ethics was inconceivable as a teacher of Socrates. No doubt the Anaxagorean did no more than drop a spark into the soul of Socrates; the store of fuel which was thereby kindled was not the gift of any master. The originality of his intellect is evinced both by the inexhaustible fulness of thought by which he was distinguished, and by a number of anecdotes which hinge upon his absent-mindedness, or rather his extraordinary concentration—we might almost say his absolute possession by the problem momentarily occupying his mind.

"One morning he was thinking about something which he could not resolve; he would not give it up, but continued thinking from early dawn until noon—there he stood fixed in thought; and at noon attention was drawn to him, and the rumour ran through the wondering crowd that Socrates had been standing and thinking about something ever since the break of day. At last, in the evening after supper, some Ionians, out of curiosity (I should explain that this was not in winter, but in summer), brought out their mats and slept in the open air, that they might watch him and see whether he would stand all night. There he stood all night until the following morning; and with the return of light he offered up a prayer to the sun, and went his way." *

This is the account given by Alcibiades, Socrates' comrade in arms during that campaign, in the "Symposium" of Plato. We are reminded of Newton, who, late one morning, was found sitting half-dressed on his bed, sunk in meditation; and on another occasion remained for a long time in his cellar, where a train of thought had taken possession of him while in the act of fetching a bottle of wine for his guests.

His fearlessness in battle, his indifference (Aristotle called it magnanimity) towards all externals, his extraordinary endurance of heat and cold, of hunger and thirst, his ability to exceed all his companions in drinking without injury to his powers of thought,—all these are traits which are either described by Alcibiades in the "Symposium," or are made to appear in the action of the dialogue itself.

* Plato, "Symposium," 220, trans. Jowett.

That a powerful nature like this must have been originally endowed with a host of strong impulses, and could only have attained serenity of soul by a process of self-education, is so probable in itself that we cannot refuse credence to the ancient traditions which point that way. The Syrian soothsayer and physiognomist, Zopyrus, as reported in the dialogue bearing his name and written by Phædo of Elis, a favourite disciple of the master, saw in the countenance of Socrates the imprint of strong sensuality. Loud protests were raised by the assembled disciples, but Socrates silenced them with the remark, "Zopyrus is not mistaken ; however, I have conquered those desires." Insufficiently attested, but not in itself improbable, considering the fiery temperament of the man, is the statement that he was subject to occasional outbursts of violent rage. Such outbursts cannot have been frequent, for nothing is better established than the masterful dominion which the powerful will was wont to exercise over every emotion. Self-command, indeed, was an indispensable qualification for the calling of his choice. For the great business of his life was conversation. His was a familiar figure by the tables of the money-changers in the market-place, or under the avenues adjoining the gymnasia. In such resorts he would enter into conversation with youths or mature men, as the case might be, and, seizing on some trivial occasion, would pass by easy, unconstrained transitions to the discussion of the deepest problems. These discourses became the pattern of a great branch of literature—the Socratic dialogue—which was cultivated by his disciples, and left as a legacy to nearly all later schools of philosophy. If, however, the great conversational artist was not to be avoided but sought for, it was indispensable that he should not allow his interlocutors to feel too keenly their intellectual inferiority. This was rendered all the easier by the fact that he had chosen a field of inquiry which was more like an undiscovered country than a well-explored region. The strictly scientific investigation of human affairs was, at that time, as good as an absolute novelty, and it was not without justice that Socrates maintained to the end that he was

a humble and modest searcher for truth, not the proud possessor of exhaustive knowledge. And he took considerable pains to strengthen this impression. "Irony" is the Greek name for the love of hoaxing, and in particular for that sly profession of modesty, which is best called self-depreciation, and which is the exact opposite of ἀλαζονεία, or boastful bombast. It harmonized excellently with the refinement of the Attic intellect, and the prevailing forms of social intercourse, carefully purged as they were of all that was crude or clownish, and it was in a particular measure distinctive of Socrates. The cultivation by him of this natural tendency as a powerful dialectic weapon, the favouring circumstance, already mentioned, of his having chosen a practically untrodden field of research,—all combined to produce the well-known Socratic irony, which it would be equally incorrect to regard as a mere mask or as a purely natural characteristic. As those whom Socrates drew into conversation were often men of considerable *amour-propre*, and as the discussion often ended, to their great discomfiture, in proving their entire lack of the clear ideas and exact knowledge they confidently believed themselves to possess, no amount of "irony" or considerate handling could prevent these colloquies from leaving behind them a bitter taste and an unpleasant memory. It was, indeed, Socrates' foremost aim to bring home to himself and others the fact that the most important questions affecting human life were as yet unsolved riddles, that words and ideas which every one had been accustomed from the days of childhood upwards to bandy about with thoughtless confidence, were in truth thickly beset with contradictions and ambiguities. Personal humiliation, too, was not the only disagreeable impression which was carried away by the participants in these dialogues. A man who raises questions relating to what has hitherto been matter of unquestioning agreement, may easily, in spite of all professions of modesty, pass for a conceited crank and know-all. And he who touches on fundamental problems, such as, "What is justice?" "What is piety?" "What is the best form of government?" is

likely to incur worse suspicion still, and be taken for a disturber of social peace, a dangerous agitator and revolutionary. It is hard for any one to meddle with the foundations of the social edifice and escape the accusation of designing its overthrow. We must remember, too, how greatly such impressions would be strengthened by the slender means of Socrates and his lack of any regular calling, and we shall find it astonishing that his person and his work remained unassailed so long. Not only did he continue for several decades, without serious opposition, though in the full blaze of publicity, a species of activity which was without precedent or parallel,—he succeeded in gathering round him some of the most gifted and some of the most illustrious youths of Athens, such as Alcibiades, Critias, and, the relations of the latter, Plato and Charmides. The "beggarly prater," as the comedians called him, even found entrance to the circle presided over by Pericles, then at the head of the state. We can judge from these facts how great a value was set in Athens on intellect and genius, how small a footing pretentious formalism and narrow-minded conventionality had in the best Athenian society. But the average Athenian, to say nothing of those who had personal grievances against Socrates, must have looked with very different eyes on the strange being, of whom the great multitude knew nothing more than that he was ever uttering insidious speech, in which he spared nothing that was high or holy; that he feared no authority, not even the sovereign Demos, whom all others flattered; and that he was to be seen walking about with proud mien and steady gaze, morning and evening, clad in uncouth dress, wearing the same threadbare garments winter and summer, "barefoot, as if to spite the shoemakers." The ordinary respectable citizen could hardly see in him anything but an idle lounger and a blasphemous quibbler. And this judgment was echoed by the comic poets, who brought on the stage the well-known figure with the Silenus face and the bizarre manners to be, along with the "mad Apollodorus," or the lean "half-starved, boxwood-coloured Chærephon," the butt of their unending ridicule.

2. There was very little opportunity for correcting this verdict. Socrates' fame as a man of courage in battle could hardly have spread beyond the narrow circle of his comrades in arms, for he never held a command. Nor did he play any part in the civil broils which disturbed Athens towards the end of the century. Possibly the Thirty Tyrants may in the first instance have taken him for an adherent to their cause on the strength of his personal relations to their chief, Critias. Only on some such hypothesis can we explain his having been appointed to command a party of four sent to arrest an opponent of the oligarchs, Leon of Salamis. Socrates, however, refused his co-operation ; with whatever freedom he might criticize the real or supposed faults of the democracy, he was by no means willing to lend his aid to the oligarchical rule of terror. But the episode was too trivial to win him the favour of the people, even supposing it had been more widely known. Once only was Socrates involved in a political incident of any importance, and on that occasion his action led to no permanent result.

In August, 406, the Athenians had gained a brilliant naval victory near the two islands known as the Arginusæ, between Lesbos and the coast of Asia Minor. Their triumph, however, was embittered by a most painful incident. The commanders failed to save the crews of a number of seriously damaged vessels, and to recover the bodies of the dead. Whether the generals were really to blame or not is more than we can tell. A circumstance not in their favour is the contradictory nature of their reply to the charges brought against them. In the first instance, this reply was to the effect that a storm following immediately upon the battle had prevented the rescue of the crews ; subsequently, however, they accused two officers, who had been charged with the task of rescue, of neglect of duty. When the subject was first raised in the assembly of the people, a calm and dispassionate hearing was given to the accused, and it was resolved to make further proceedings depend on the preliminary decision of the competent authority, the council of five hundred. In the interval there occurred an event which led to lamentable

consequences. There was a celebration of the Apaturia, a tribal festival of the Ionians, at which the Athenian people was wont to assemble divided by "brotherhoods." On these occasions children who had been born in the course of the year were presented to the members of the brotherhood, and entered in the registers, schoolboys delighted their parents by public recitations of poetry, and so forth. Above all, solemn sacrifices were offered to the gods who presided over the different brotherhoods. It was a family festival, in the strictest sense of the word, comparable to our Christmas. Men counted up the number of their dear ones, and every gap which death had made in their ranks was felt with double poignancy. The popular indignation was roused to increased bitterness against the generals whose fault it was, or was supposed to be, that so many citizens had met their death, and that others had been deprived of those funeral rites which the religious feeling of the ancients prized so highly. As if in mockery of the joyous festival, the fathers and brothers of the victims went about in mourning garb and with shaven heads, thus inflaming the passions of the multitude. Under these circumstances proceedings were reopened in the council. A resolution proposed by Callixenus was adopted, according to which the judicial investigation of the case was to be dropped, and an assembly of the people was to decide the guilt or innocence of the generals by a secret vote, affecting the accused *en bloc*. A verdict of guilty was to be followed by the execution of the generals and the confiscation of their property. The assembly which was summoned to deal with the case was the stormiest, outside times of actual revolution, of which we have any record. Whether, and to what extent, the proposal of Callixenus was illegal, is a question on which the best authorities on Athenian constitutional law are still divided in opinion. In any case it ran counter to the spirit of the constitution, and objection was formally taken to it on that ground by Euryptolemus and his friends. Such action had the effect of suspending proceedings in respect of the impugned proposal until a judicial decision had been taken as to its alleged illegality.

If the allegation was sustained, the proposer and his associates were liable to penalties of great severity. Even at that moment, when the waves of passion ran so high, the assembled people did not simply override these constitutional forms. The assembly was divided in opinion. Some cried that "it was a shame that the people should be thwarted of its will;" others, that "it was a shame if the people did not respect the laws of its own making." It would appear that the decisive impetus was given by the appearance of a man who had been on one of the twenty-five shipwrecked triremes, and had with great difficulty escaped to land on a meal-tub. He reported that the dying wish of his comrades had been that vengeance might be taken on the generals who had left brave and victorious citizens in the lurch. Euryptolemus was induced, by the threat of including him in the accusation, to withdraw his objection. But all obstacles were not thereby removed. The proceedings of the assembly were regulated by a body of fifty men, the prytanes, consisting of the representatives of one of the ten tribes in the council of five hundred, and forming a species of standing committee of that council for the tenth part of the year. In accordance with the regular rotation, the prytanes for the time being were the representatives of the tribe Antiochis, to which Socrates belonged. The majority of the committee refused to put the proposal of Callixenus to the vote. This roused another storm of indignation, and the new obstacle was overcome by the same threat as before. Socrates alone, as his disciples Plato and Xenophon tell us, adhered inflexibly to his conscientious convictions.

The proceedings now took their regular course. Intimidation had so far had the result of deciding the preliminary constitutional questions in the sense demanded by the dominant feeling of the multitude, but the assembly had not for all that degenerated into a riot. Euryptolemus, the advocate for the generals, did not ask for an acquittal, but merely that the prosecution should be conducted in legal form against each of the accused separately, in accordance with a custom which, though possibly not

binding on the assembly, had the force of an established usage, and was supported by the "decree of Cannonus." Callixenus, on the other side, persisted in his original proposal. Both speeches were listened to in silence. The show of hands which followed gave a majority of votes to Euryptolemus. At least such was the report of the officials charged with the duty of counting. But this report was challenged, perhaps not without reason. The majority of the prytanes had only yielded to superior force, and it is possible that the enumeration may not have been made with absolute impartiality. A second show of hands was demanded, and this time the result was unfavourable to Euryptolemus. And now came the last, secret vote, and the urns were filled with the voting-counters which were to decide the lot of the accused. The verdict given was one of "guilty," which meant death for the six generals who were in Athens, and confiscation of property for the two who were absent.

This episode was followed, as was usual in Athens, by a violent reaction. After the lapse of a few years an indictment was brought against the misleaders of the people, which drove them into exile, and in the end caused their leader Callixenus to commit suicide. Was the fruitless resistance of that odd creature called Socrates remembered at this juncture? and was he held in higher esteem on that account? He may have been, but it is not probable. For us, however, a twofold interest attaches to this political incident. It illustrates Socrates' strength of character, and it throws a side-light on the external circumstances of his life. If the Socratic school had not kept this episode in remembrance, and thought it worthy of record, we should never have known that their master had once been a member of the council, and had not disdained to take part in the lot-drawing that led to this office. That this was the only office he ever held, we have the express assurance of Plato. But the same motives which induced him to take part in this drawing of lots, must have guided his actions on other occasions as well. Probably he engaged more than once in the favourite occupation of old

Athenians of the less wealthy class, and eked out the offerings of affection which he received from his friends with the modest pay of the heliast, or juror. In the law courts he would certainly find food for those studies of human nature in which he delighted. But he would obtain material for these studies chiefly from the discussions in which he was never weary of engaging, but which he no doubt valued primarily for the assistance he derived from them in thinking out his own problems. It is now time to give some account of the form, the matter, and the results of the investigations thus conducted.

3. "Two things may be ascribed to Socrates," so we are informed by his intellectual grandchild, Aristotle, "inductive reasoning and the fixing of general concepts." The inductive reasoning, we may add, was auxiliary to the formation of the concepts. The word "induction" is here used in a sense somewhat different from that which it now bears. We understand by it that intellectual operation which elicits from a number of particular cases a general rule affecting a whole class of facts. By the way of induction we ascertain uniformities of coexistence and of succession, whether these be ultimate or merely derivative laws. Thus it is a correct induction which teaches us that all men are mortal; an incorrect one, because only approximately complete, which affirms that in the whole class of mammals there are none that lay eggs, but that all bring their young into the world alive. Socratic induction, like ours, proceeds by the comparison of individual instances; but its goal is the attainment of a norm, valid, not for nature, but for ideas. Its chief aim is the determination of concepts, that is, definition. The procedure employed is twofold. Sometimes a series of instances is passed in review, and an attempt made to ascertain what elements are common to them all, and thus deduce a general determination of the concept. The second species of induction starts from already existing and current definitions, which it subjects to a scrutiny, with the view of discovering whether, and to what extent, they rest on elements which are really common to the

different instances comprised under them ; or, on the other hand, whether, and to what extent, the possession of common characteristics is an illusion, and if so, what modification, what extension, or what limitation will make the definition a true expression of common characteristics. Aristotle, in distinguishing between these two species, reserves the name "induction" (the Greek word signifies a "leading towards" a goal) for the first of them ; to the second he applies the name of "parable," that is, juxtaposition for the purposes of comparison. The Platonic dialogues, particularly those of the earlier, or Socratic period, are full of instances of both these methods, and will be of the greatest service to us in the task of illustrating them. The following example, however, will be taken from an authority whose lack of subtlety will clear him of any suspicion of having given us his own thoughts and methods as those of Socrates. The question arose in the circle of disciples, so Xenophon tells us, "What is justice? and what is injustice?" Socrates proposes to write in the sand, side by side, the initial letters of the two words, and underneath them the names of the various actions that belong to the respective categories. In the second column are entered such actions as lying, fraud, violence, and so forth. Attention is now drawn to instances which seem to contradict this arrangement. It appears, in the first instance, that all these actions, when performed in war, and against enemies, cease to be unjust. Thus a first modification is arrived at. The cited modes of action are to come under the head of injustice only when practised against friends, in the widest sense of the word. But the matter cannot rest here. How if a general, with the object of reviving the sinking courage of his troops, makes a false announcement of the near approach of allied forces? How if a father, whose sick child has refused his medicine, mixes it in his food, and by this deception procures his restoration to health? And again, supposing we have a friend afflicted with melancholia, how if we remove from his possession the weapon by which he might be tempted to take leave of life? We thus obtain a new element in

the determination of the concept. In order that the actions named may be rightly regarded as species of injustice, they must be performed in the intention of injuring the persons affected by them. It is true that the investigation does not issue in a formal definition; it is, however, an essay in classification, such as is calculated to prepare the way for such a definition. It is concerned principally with the extent, not with the content, of the concept in question. But the exacter determination of the sub-varieties of the species "injustice" paves the way for a stricter delimitation of the content of that concept. Whatever form the definition might have finally assumed, it could not but have included "the employment of fraud or violence for the injury of others than enemies in a state of war."

Thus, although Socrates was primarily concerned with the philosophy of concepts, and to that extent followed a line of investigation leading towards the universal, it was only with the greatest caution and deliberation that he passed from the particular to the general. No feature of his method is better attested. In his dread of premature generalizations, he is entirely at one with those inquirers who in modern times have been considered as special representatives of the inductive method. We are continually reminded of the Baconian precautions against inadmissible generalizations. As to the subject-matter for his inductions, that could only be supplied by the incidents and the ideas which pertain to everyday life and everyday thought. "Socrates always chose the most obvious and the most commonly accepted starting-point for his investigations, thinking this the safest plan," says Xenophon, and on this point he is in the closest agreement with Plato. His discourse was full of shoemakers and smiths, of fullers and cooks, hardly less so of oxen, horses, and asses. His conversation thus had a certain homely flavour, and often drew forth mocking comment, which he, however, bore with smiling equanimity, and with that serene trust in God which for him was synonymous with faith in the inevitable victory of truth.

Nor was his peculiar mode of procedure limited to the

construction of concepts. Concepts, indeed, are merely the elements of judgments. We need not be surprised if Socrates endeavoured to promote clearness and sureness of judgment by direct as well as by indirect means, or if he remained true to his methods outside the sphere of theoretical investigation. Did he propose to cure a youth of immature self-confidence, and shake his belief that he was competent to manage the affairs of the state? He would analyze the general conception of state-craft into its component parts, and thus, by a series of questions and answers, lead the would-be statesman imperceptibly to the conclusion that he was altogether lacking in the requisite knowledge. On another occasion he uses the same method for an entirely opposite purpose. A young man, of good sense and ripe judgment, but over-modest, who shrinks from taking part in the debates of the assembly, is brought by a series of questions to perceive that he has no cause to be shy before any one of the different classes of which the assembly is composed, and that he need not therefore fear to face that assembly as a whole. If special knowledge is to be proved to be the indispensable qualification for the public service, recourse is again had to questions. Who, it is asked, would employ a physician, a pilot, a carpenter, and so forth, who had been chosen by lot, instead of selecting a man of known and tried capacity for the task he was required to perform? These are comparatively trivial examples of the Socratic method. But it remains the same in the treatment of much more difficult and complicated subjects. Unwearied, too, is the perseverance of the master in threading the mazes of an intricate problem. The desired solution, when apparently within easy grasp, becomes more remote than ever; it turns and doubles like a hunted fox, and, though it may be finally run to earth, the chase often ends in a confession of failure, and the long toil must be begun afresh. The highest ethical virtue of the researcher, inexhaustible patience, is here combined with one of the greatest of intellectual excellences, absolute freedom from prejudice. No proposition, to express the Socratic attitude in a formula, is so self-evident, so

universally true, that we may not be called upon, good ground being shown, to reconsider it on first principles and test its validity anew. No assertion is so paradoxical or so shocking as to absolve us from the duty of giving it a full and fair hearing, of diligently scrutinizing the arguments in its favour and weighing them with judicial impartiality. No investigation, however laborious, is to be shirked, no opinion, however repugnant to our feelings, is to be howled down, or stifled in ridicule and opprobrium. The wide-hearted, strong-headed Athenian thinker succeeded in combining two almost irreconcilable attributes—fervid zeal in discussing the highest concerns of man, and cool, dispassionate candour in the treatment of these very questions. His judgment is uncorrupted by love, unclouded by hate. There was, indeed, but one thing which he ever hated, to wit, that "hatred of discourse," or "misology" which is the great obstacle to unfettered and unprejudiced discussion. "A life without cross-examination," that is, without dialogues in which the intellect is exercised in the pursuit of the truth, is for him "not worth living."

From the form and the spirit of the Socratic dialogues we pass on to their teaching. At this point the reader must allow us a digression. The names of Plato, of Xenophon, and of Aristotle have been mentioned more than once in the preceding pages. In future chapters we shall have occasion to treat of these men in their character of disciples, direct or indirect, of Socrates. But in their capacity of authorities for their master's teaching they require some preliminary consideration now. We do not possess a single writing of Socrates himself, with the possible exception of four lines of verse, and these would tell us nothing, even if their authenticity were unquestioned. Our knowledge of his teaching rests, therefore, on the testimony of others, and in greatly preponderating measure on that of the three men we have named. In respect of the method and spirit of Socrates they are in such complete accord that hitherto we have been able to dispense with all discussion of their relative trustworthiness. Now, however, this question imperatively demands our attention.

4. By far the greater part of our knowledge is derived from the works of Plato. These are all written in the form of dialogues. In all of them, with one exception, Socrates appears as one of the characters, and usually he plays the principal part. The magnificent homage thus rendered to the master by the most eminent of his disciples could not but be full of instruction for us. An artist of the first order, a painter of word-portraits with scarce an equal, has presented us with a marvellously clear and vivid likeness of his revered friend. The fidelity of this delineation is untainted by the least shadow of doubt. It is perfectly consistent with itself and with all other accounts of the character of Socrates. There is idealization, it must be allowed, just as in all other works of great artists in portraiture. The essential features are made to stand out in bold relief, while the subordinate traits, or those which harmonize ill with the general effect, are lightly sketched or left in shadow. It must be remembered, too, that Plato nowhere lays claim to exhaustiveness of treatment, and that his silence on various episodes in the life of Socrates, on this or that detail of his career or his personal relations, *e.g.* to Archelaus, Xenophon, and others, does not possess the slightest evidential value.

The case is very different with the *teaching* contained in the writings of Plato. As the work of an original thinker of the first rank, they could hardly be expected to be a bare reproduction of the teachings of Socrates. Aristotle, who, as we shall presently see, is our chief witness on such matters, expressly declares that one of the fundamental doctrines of Plato, the so-called doctrine of ideas, was foreign to Socrates. Now this very doctrine receives manifold and varying illustration in the different writings of Plato, and it undergoes more than one transformation, partly in consequence of the thinker's own advance, partly as a result of the influence of others. And yet this doctrine, both in its primary form and in most of its modifications, is put by Plato into the mouth of Socrates. It is as clear as daylight that the poet-philosopher, both here and elsewhere, has allowed himself full and unrestricted liberty,

as, indeed, was to be expected. How far it is true to say that Plato started with a fund of convictions which he shared with Socrates, to what extent he believed himself to have elaborated and modified the main theories of the latter in strict accordance with the spirit of the venerated teacher, how, in his declining years, he broke with his own past and simultaneously severed the link which bound him to Socrates, whom he first relegated to the background and then excluded altogether from the framework of his dialogues,—all this will be made clear when we come to deal with the development of Plato himself.

Much less artistic freedom, and yet not much more historical fidelity, is to be found in the accounts left us by Xenophon. This capable officer, who was also a gifted author, employed the leisure of middle age in composing a series of writings descriptive of the life and teaching of Socrates. The most considerable of these is the work known as the "Memorabilia," or noteworthy sayings and doings of Socrates. Those who have acquired a familiarity with the chief characteristics of Xenophon from the numerous other productions of his busy pen, will approach the study of this work and the three accessory writings, in which it is, so to speak, framed, the "Symposium," the "Œconomicus," and the somewhat slight "Apology" or defence of Socrates, with not unfavourable expectations. For neither speculative originality nor the impulse towards artistic adaptation is present, one would think, in sufficient measure to impair the truthfulness of these records. Such expectations, however, are doomed to be but imperfectly realized. Xenophon lacked certain gifts which might have impeded him in his undertaking, but at the same time, he lacked some of the qualifications most important for its success.

That Xenophon's accounts of the discourses of Socrates do not always correspond with the truth, may be proved to demonstration from the text of Xenophon himself. At the beginning of the work on domestic economy he affirms that he was himself present and heard the conversation of Socrates with Critobulus. This statement must be a pure

invention. For in the course of the dialogue, mention is made of an event which Xenophon could not possibly have heard Socrates speak of. We refer to the death of Cyrus the Younger, who fell at Cunaxa, B.C. 401. Xenophon was in the camp of Cyrus at the time, and he did not return to Greece till many years later, long after the execution of Socrates in B.C. 399. And we need not go far for confirmation of the suspicion thus aroused. Witness the detailed consideration given to Persian society, a subject with which the disciple had so much, and the master so little, concern. The latter, indeed, had never visited foreign countries; in fact, after reaching man's estate, he had, apart from a pilgrimage to Delphi, never left Athens, except in fulfilment of his military duties. Again, the affectionate lingering over the minutiæ of agriculture is natural enough to an enthusiastic farmer like Xenophon, but is not a little strange in the mouth of Socrates, who never unnecessarily set foot outside the city gate, because "fields and trees," as Plato makes him say, "had nothing to teach him." The "Œconomicus" must therefore be erased from the list of strictly historical records. And it would be vain to attempt to assign to this work, or to the "Symposium" either, any such exceptional position as would enable us to maintain intact the historical character of the "Memorabilia." We find a passage of the last-named work dealing with peoples of Asia Minor, the Mysians and the Pisidians, describing the peculiarities of the country they inhabit and the manner in which they carry on war. These subjects are here treated of precisely in the same way as in the "Anabasis," the work, that is to say, in which Xenophon recorded the retreat of the Ten Thousand, in which he himself took part, and incidentally had occasion to give an account, based on personal observation, of the above-named tribes. The true state of the case is again as clear as daylight. It is Xenophon himself that speaks to us through the mouth of Socrates. Are we to conclude from such examples as these that our author's use of the name of Socrates is never anything but an aid to artistic effect, that the dialogues are pure fictions, or even that Xenophon

never wished them to be regarded as anything else? This thesis has been maintained in recent years, but, as we think, without any convincing force. In the first place, the assumption that Xenophon does not claim to give a record of actual facts in his Socratic writings is in glaring contradiction with the nature of the task which he set before himself, particularly in the "Memorabilia." For in that work he announces his intention of combating the accusations brought against Socrates at his trial, possibly with special reference to the literary form afterwards given to these accusations by the rhetorician Polycrates. Nor does he make exclusive use of dialogue; the habits of Socrates, and particular incidents of his life are laid before us in the form of narrative. Moreover, Xenophon declares his design of completing in some essential parts the accounts given by other disciples. All this would be meaningless if he desired the conversations reported in the works to be regarded as mere fiction. The phrase "Wahrheit und Dichtung" has been very fittingly applied to the substance of these discourses. It is improbable in the highest degree that Xenophon should have invented everything and reported nothing; that he should have strained his not too powerful imagination to its utmost limit, and made absolutely no use of the treasures stored in his memory. And we have unmistakable indications that by no means all of the thoughts, the turns of phrase, the formulas, which occur in these discourses, originated in the relatively unfertile and commonplace mind of Xenophon himself. By the side of almost intolerable prolixities we have passages almost incomprehensible in their compressed brevity; by the side of utterances which repel by their triviality, we have others marked by incisive originality and pungent paradox. Dialogues, too, occur which come to no satisfactory conclusion; and force us to the hypothesis that the reporter of them overlooked or failed to understand their real scope and point.

But how are we to draw the line of demarcation between the authentic and the inauthentic with anything like certainty? This is a question which has only been approached

in recent years, but we believe a fundamentally accurate answer has been found to it. If we are to avoid allowing a fatal preponderance to the subjective element, particularly to personal preferences or antipathies, for or against individual features in Xenophon's presentation; if we are to render to Socrates the things that are of Socrates, and to Xenophon the things that are Xenophon's,—it is absolutely necessary to look for some objective standard of judgment. Nor need the search be in vain. We possess, on the one hand, numerous other works of Xenophon from which we may gain a clear idea of his personal characteristics, and even see them to a large extent growing out of the circumstances of his life. On the other hand, we have at our disposal certain accounts of the substance of the Socratic teaching, which, though not very numerous, are thoroughly trustworthy. The application of these two criteria demands the utmost care and the nicest discrimination. It would clash with the plan of the present work to present the reader with a full and detailed account of this investigation. The result of the first portion of it will be embodied in a subsequent section devoted to the life and writings of Xenophon. The second of the criteria we have referred to is supplied by the curt but thoroughly trustworthy statements of Aristotle. In him we have a witness who unites the fullest expert knowledge with the keenest judicial acumen; who was near enough to that great historical fact, the work of Socrates, to be accurately informed upon it, and at the same time far enough to be unmoved by the spell of that magic personality, and to be proof against any leaning towards hero-worship. His exposition, finally, is neither apologetic in tone nor characterized by an artistic disposition of light and shadows, but is plainly and severely matter-of-fact. Not that this is a source of information which may be drawn upon without several precautions. The wording of the references does not always enable us to say with certainty whether Aristotle has the historical Socrates in view or the Socrates of Plato's dialogues. Moreover, he gives no connected account of Socrates' teaching; he only makes casual

mention of isolated features of it, generally for a polemical purpose, probably laying a one-sided emphasis on the weak points it presents to criticism, It is nevertheless possible, especially if we keep a watchful eye on the sources of error just mentioned, to reap from those references a harvest of untold value. It must not be forgotten, of course, that they are incomplete. Aristotle lived in the midst of the schools of the Socratics; he belonged to one of the most important of them himself, and those parts of Socrates' teaching which were universally known to be his, and which offered the least handle to criticism, were exactly the parts of which he had least occasion to speak. But in respect of the pith and marrow of Socratic doctrine, the fundamental outline underlying all nuances of special developments, we are not under the necessity of appealing to express documentary evidence. The nature of the mighty cause is revealed to us by its own prodigious effects. The streams which flowed forth from Paradise to water all the world bore eloquent testimony to their glorious fount and origin.

CHAPTER IV.

THE TEACHING OF SOCRATES.

1. "No man errs of his own free will." These few words embody the kernel of Socratism. This is the trunk which we have to follow downwards to its roots, and upwards to its many ramifications. This short sentence is a terse expression of the conviction that every moral deficiency has its origin in the intellect, and depends on a vagary of the understanding. In other words—He who knows what is right does what is right; want of insight is the one and only source of moral shortcoming. In view of this doctrine we readily comprehend how Socrates was bound to put an infinite value on clearness of conception. It is more difficult to see how this inordinately high estimate of the intellect and of its supreme significance for the conduct of life came to be formed in the mind of Socrates. Certainly the endeavour to replace hazy ideas and dim conjecture by sharply outlined concepts and clear comprehension was a leading characteristic of the whole of that age which we have referred to in a previous section as the age of enlightenment. The zeal of that age in the culture of the intellect, and its employment in the elucidation of the chief problems both of corporate and of individual life, the earnest endeavour to replace tradition by self-won knowledge, blind faith by illuminated thought, —all these tendencies have already been reviewed by us repeatedly and in their most characteristic manifestations. At the same time, we have had to record various one-sided judgments into which men were misled by the new

trend of thought; for example, the leaning towards an unhistorically rationalistic conception of the past of mankind, particularly with reference to the beginnings of civilization, the origin of the state, of language, and of society. But the intellectualism, as we have termed it, of that age culminates in Socrates. Before his time it had been held that the will, equally with the intellect, needed a schooling which was to be obtained by means of rewards and punishments, exercise and habituation. The reader may refer to the account we have already given of the educational theories current in that epoch. Socrates argues just as if what Aristotle calls the irrational part of the soul did not exist. All action is determined by the intellect. And the latter is all-powerful. Such a thing as knowing what is right and yet disobeying that knowledge, believing an action wrong and yet yielding to the motives that impel to it, is for Socrates not merely a sad and disastrous occurrence; it is a sheer impossibility. He does not combat or condemn, he simply denies, that state of mind which his contemporaries called "being overcome by desire," and to which the Roman poet gave typical expression in the words, "Video meliora proboque; deteriora sequor" ("I see and approve of the better, but follow the worse").

Nothing is easier than to detect and to arraign the one-sidedness of this point of view. What is much more important is to yield full and entire recognition to the element of truth contained in the exaggeration, to realize how it was that Socrates came to take an important fraction of the truth for the whole, and to estimate the magnitude of the service rendered to humanity by the greatest of the great "one-eyed men" in setting this neglected part of truth in the most glaring light.

Although the state of mind whose existence is denied by Socrates does really occur, its occurrence is a far rarer phenomenon than is generally supposed. That which is overcome by passion is often not character or conviction, but a mere semblance of such. And want of clearness of thought, confused conceptions, ignorance of the grounds as

well as of the full scope and exact bearing of precepts to which a vague and general assent is yielded,—these and other intellectual shortcomings go a long way towards accounting for that chasm between principles and practice which is the greatest curse of life. Where these intellectual deficiencies do not altogether destroy unity of character, they yet limit its continuance ; and it is through them that the most contradictory opposites are enabled to lodge peaceably together in the same breast. It is such want of clearness and certainty that makes characters brittle and paralyzes their powers of resistance, provides an easy victory for wrong motives, and often gives the false impression that it was the strength of the attack, not the weakness of the defence, that brought about the defeat. We even find confusion of thought bringing men to acknowledge simultaneously several supreme standards of judgment which contradict each other. The resulting anarchy of soul can hardly be expressed better than in the words of a modern French writer of comedies, who makes one of his characters say, "Which morality do you mean ? There are thirty-six of them. There is a social morality which is not the same as political morality, and this again has nothing to do with the morality of religion, which, in its turn, has nothing in common with the morality of business."

But in spite of all this, the assertion that right thinking is a guarantee for right acting has a very limited sphere of validity. It can be seriously made only when the end of the action is unquestioned, and the sole doubt is as to the choice of means. This is particularly the case where the end is determined by the undoubted interest of the agent. A husbandman sowing his field, a pilot guiding the helm, an artisan in his workshop, must, in the great majority of cases, have their will directed to the best possible fulfilment of the task before them. Success or failure will for them depend principally on their general acumen and their special knowledge. In cases of this type the fundamental principle of Socrates is thus at least approximately true. And nothing caused Socrates so much lasting

astonishment as the perception, which continuously forced itself upon him, that in the subordinate departments of life men either possess or strive earnestly for the possession of clear insight into the relations between means and ends, while in their higher concerns, in matters closely affecting their weal or woe, nothing of the kind is discernible. This contrast made the strongest possible impression upon him, and had a decisive influence on the direction of his thought. He saw that in all crafts and callings, clearness of intellect puts an end to botching and bungling, and he expected the like progress to follow as soon as the life of individuals and of the community should be illuminated by clear insight and regulated by unambiguous rules of conduct, which latter could be nothing else than a system of means conducive to the highest ends.

"No man errs of his own free will." This utterance has a double significance. First there is the conviction that all the numberless shortcomings of actual occurrence originate in insufficient development of the understanding. And there is a second conviction, lying at the root of the first, and conditioning it, namely, that it is only as to the means, not the end, of actions that disagreement exists among men. Every one without exception is supposed to desire what is good. It is not in what they desire that men are distinguished from each other, but simply and solely in the measure of their capacity for realizing the common object of endeavour—a difference which depends entirely on their several degrees of intellectual development.

The solution we have just obtained suggests yet another enigma. Whence comes this moral optimism of our sage? What was the origin of his faith that every moral deficiency arises from error and never from depravity of heart? The primary answer to this question is as follows: He held it for an undoubted truth that moral goodness and happiness, that moral badness and unhappiness, are inseparably united, and that only a delusion bordering on blindness could choose the second and reject the first. A line of the comic poet Epicharmus, slightly modified, was a favourite quotation in Socratic circles—

"No man willingly is wretched, nor against his will is blest."

The Greek word here translated "wretched" has a twofold meaning, which may be understood from a comparison of the two phrases, "a wretched life," "a wicked wretch." Such ambiguities of language gave this optimistic belief an appearance of self-evident truth, which it most certainly does not possess. There is one phrase in particular whose double meaning was especially calculated to provoke this illusion. The Greek εὖ πράττειν, like the English *to do well*, is a common expression for the two ideas of right action and of prosperity. And thus, not only is the unpractised thinker led into the error of identifying well-doing with well-being; the distinction between the "goodness" of an action which is good in the sense of serving the interests of the agent, and that "goodness" which means being calculated to advance the ends of society, tends to be obliterated. Just as we speak of a "bad" character and at the same time of "bad" tools or "bad" sleep, so the Greek language has no lack of condemnatory epithets which are equally applicable to an unserviceable implement, to a disposition of will running counter to the common welfare, and to anything which is in a condition incompatible with its own preservation. Thus there are many passages in which Plato seems to consider the fundamental principle of Socrates, "No man errs of his own free will," sufficiently proved by a simple reference to the fact that no one chooses voluntarily what is bad or hurtful—a mode of reasoning which entirely overlooks the distinctions we have just been insisting upon.

The impatient reader has probably anticipated the remark we are about to make. Necessary as it may be to call attention to the misleading character of certain linguistic usages, it cannot be that we have here touched the root of the matter. It is not from verbal ambiguities or from lack of nice discrimination between allied concepts that we expect a new, vigorous, and fertile philosophy of life to take its rise. If Socrates maintained the identity

of virtue and happiness, there can be no doubt that he did so firstly and chiefly because he had found them identical in his own experience. It is not the language of his countrymen, but the voice of his own inmost being, that speaks to us here.

2. Cleanthes, the second head of the Stoic school, wrote a book "on Pleasure," in which he quoted, as a favourite saying of Socrates, the phrase, "the same man is just and happy." In almost verbal agreement with this quotation are the following lines, taken from an elegy, of which unfortunately only a fragment is preserved, composed by Aristotle on the early death of his fellow-student, Eudemus of Cyprus :—

> "Thus by precept and deed hath he convincingly proved
> That to be happy and good is for ever not two things, but one thing,
> That to be either alone passes the power of man."

The man here spoken of is one who "alone, or first among mortals," proclaimed the above doctrine—one, moreover, to whom Eudemus, moved by "high friendship," that is, by piety, raised an altar when he came to Athens, thus instituting a kind of hero-worship of him (cf. Vol. I. p. 167). This man will be identified, on an impartial consideration of the case, not, as by some commentators ancient and modern, with Plato, who was still alive when Eudemus died (in 353), but with Plato's master Socrates. But one testimony more or less matters little here. The identification of excellence with *εὐδαιμονία*, or happiness, is the common property of all the Socratic school, however manifold may have been the modifications which this doctrine received at their hands. To its originator the principle may have seemed self-evident or nearly so ; the more critical eyes of the disciples saw clearly the necessity for proof. And the greatest of the Socratic pupils, Plato, in the most powerful of all his works, the "Republic," applied the whole force of his intellect to the proof of the thesis : "The just man, as just, and because he is just, is happy."

Before we proceed, let us dwell for a moment on the

motives which led Socrates to adopt this doctrine and to employ all the powers of his mighty intellect in preaching and enforcing it. The main psychological factors of the case are doubtless as follows: Socrates possessed an ideal —an ideal of calm self-possession, of justice, of fearlessness, of independence. He felt that he was happy because, and in so far as, he lived up to this ideal. He looked on the world around. He found others, too, in possession of ideals, but half-hearted withal, lukewarm, divided in mind, inconsistent; and he saw that the effects of these causes were manifold deviations from paths once entered upon, gifted intellects and forceful characters failing, through lack of sure guidance, to secure for their possessors inward harmony and lasting peace. To be such a plaything of capricious impulses seemed to him a "slavish" condition, unworthy of a free man. This is the reproach which Alcibiades, the most brilliant representative of the type, addresses to himself in the "Symposium" of Plato. Such, at least, he appeared to himself to be in comparison with Socrates, as he listened to his instruction with beating heart and tears in his eyes, the prey of such emotion as none other could arouse in him, not even a finished orator like his uncle Pericles. And such a "slavish" disposition, according to Xenophon, was attributed by Socrates to those who, for want of knowledge of "the good, the beautiful, and the just," groped and wavered in their actions like a traveller who has lost his way, or a clumsy arithmetician who brings out now one, now another, answer to the same problem. That which Socrates observed with pain to be lacking in the character of even the foremost of his contemporaries was inward consistency and self-containedness—the government of the whole man by a will at one with itself and free from all taint of division. We have termed him the great champion of enlightenment; he was at the same time the man who saw most clearly, and felt most intensely, the inevitable defects of an age of criticism and enlightenment. Ancient faith was undermined; traditional standards of conduct seemed outwardly intact, but their authority was gone; men's souls were

full of unrest and desolating discord. This distracted condition, whose voice speaks to us to-day in the dramas of Euripides, must have awakened in deeper natures a yearning for a new theory of life, which should exercise the same undivided dominion over man as religion had done before. Socrates was the originator of such a theory. Not that his ideals did not substantially agree in many points with the traditions of his countrymen. It was only in a few points, chiefly with reference to state organization, that he himself subjected the traditions to a searching examination, but he paved the way for a more exhaustive criticism of them all. The pathos of his life lay in the earnest struggle he maintained against all that produced discord and schism within the soul. As Cleanthes tells us in the passage quoted above, he "cursed as impious him who first sundered the just from the useful," and, thus, we may add, introduced a double weight and measure in the souls of men. It was intolerable to him that men should follow, now an ethical ideal good enough to declaim about on high and holy days, now an ideal of happiness poor enough to live for in work-day moods; that they should now bow the knee before the image of God, and now lend their arms to the service of an idol. He could not tolerate that men should now unite in condemning a perjured red-handed usurper like Archelaus of Macedonia, and again join unanimously in casting glances of admiration and envy on the same man's greatness and prosperity.* Although the task to which Socrates applied himself was that of securing full recognition for a rule of life already in existence, and of justifying the acceptance of it on unimpeachable first principles, still, he opened up a path which could not but lead to the transformation of that rule. For the proposition, "Virtue is happiness," early admitted of being converted into, "Happiness is virtue." The eudæmonism which at first was occupied chiefly, if not exclusively, in establishing the validity of traditional precepts, was conducted by an infallible necessity to a

* See Plato's "Gorgias."

critical scrutiny of the whole content of these precepts. The ground was cleared for a revolutionary reconstruction of moral, social, and political doctrines.

But of this revolution and of those contributions to it which may be verified as due to Socrates himself, it will be time to speak later. What we are at present concerned to do is to follow the fundamental principle of Socrates into its consequences. Let us hear what Xenophon has to say on this subject. One of those discourses which are much too full of matter to be regarded as the product of Xenophon's own intellect runs as follows: "Wisdom and virtue" —it is true that only one particular species of virtue is named at first, but the addition of other species afterwards completes the idea—

> "Wisdom and virtue he did not distinguish, but he deemed that one thing was the mark of both, that a man should know and practise the beautiful and the good, and that he should likewise know and avoid what is foul (shameful) and bad. If he were asked further what he thought of those who know what they ought to do but perform the opposite, whether he thought them wise and excellent, then he would answer, 'Not more so than unwise and inferior.'"

In other words, he affirmed contradiction between knowledge and action to be an impossibility, and drew the inference that all moral excellence is simply and solely wisdom. By its application to the different departments of life, virtue appeared to be manifold. In truth it was one, because identical with insight or wisdom. As wisdom, it could be taught, and—possibly because teaching of such importance cannot slip from the mind—when once acquired, could not be lost. We have here woven together material taken partly from Plato and partly from Xenophon, and thus placed before the reader the central framework of Socrates' teaching on virtue. For it is only a central framework that we can offer, not a complete structure. How far Socrates advanced beyond the elementary portions of his teaching by way of working it out in detail, we are not likely ever to know with full certitude and

exactness. Here we have to distinguish between two things—the positive content of his ethical teaching and its logical justification. We will take the second first.

3. The pyschological ground of Socrates' belief in what we may call the all-sufficiency of the intellect is already known to us. It is without doubt contained in the fact that he was so full of his own ideals as to be unable to conceive deviation from them as other than the result of intellectual error. But the psychological justification of a theory is one thing, its logical justification quite another. A man who desired proof and not declamation, who always endeavoured to start from what was most currently accepted and least open to doubt, could not be satisfied with an appeal to his own feelings. He sought for the most objective possible proof, and his task was rendered all the easier by a particular defect in the thought of that age—a failure to distinguish what we term the ethics of the individual from what we term social ethics. It was on the former that Socrates originally founded his own ethical system. Every man desires his own well-being. And if his action contradicts this aim, otherwise than from devotion to an aim recognized as higher, or from blindness due to an overmastering passion, such contradiction may be ascribed to lack of knowledge, or, as we should add, to lack of skill in the application of knowledge. This simple reflexion seems to have been the starting-point of the Socratic theory, so far, at least, as this was based on grounds cognizable by the understanding.

Countless perversities of conduct, hurtful to the perpetrators of them, appeared as deviations from a goal which no one with a clear consciousness of its nature would be willing to condemn. It was an easy step to look at offences against social morality in the same light. It was in the interests of this identification that he sought to prove that anti-social actions are hurtful to the doers of them. Of arguments in this sense Xenophon's "Memorabilia" is full. Friendship is to be cultivated because a friend is the most useful of possessions. Family quarrels are to be avoided because it is foolish to turn to our own

hurt what Nature gave us for our good. The laws are to be obeyed because such obedience is highly profitable ; and so forth. We are unable to accept the view of certain modern critics that not only the tediously long and detailed exposition, but also the main thought, is un-Socratic. To declare all such matter unworthy of Socrates is to overlook several distinctions which in this connexion cannot be neglected with impunity. What is more important, it is to ignore the consequences which flow from the fundamental tendency of Socratism. The passionate yearning to save human lives from being swayed hither and thither by self-contradictory wills, by random opinions and delusions, could not but issue in logical demonstrations of this type. That which was required was a reduction of "should be" to "is," a replacing of the unprovable imperative by an indicative bearing on unquestioned and undoubted human interests. It was necessary that much should be justified before the bar of reason which all souls of native worth and noble nurture feel to need no justification whatever. The uneasy feelings which these expositions rouse in the modern reader is due partly to causes of this kind as well as to the trivialities of Xenophon's manner, and his habit of spinning out the most obvious thoughts to inordinate length. Moreover, the impression is conveyed that these exhortations, pointing, as they do, to remote advantages obtainable at the cost of immediate and considerable efforts and sacrifices, are ill adapted to provide efficient motives to action. There is even something repulsive in the idea of such motives being constantly present in the consciousness of those who are moved by them. A mother who nurses her sick child with the object, and only the object, of bringing him up to be the support of her old age, is a grotesque and revolting spectacle. But, apart from the provision of motives, and ever-present motives, there is another point of view, much more favourable to these disquisitions, that of the intellectual justification, the rational basis of ethical obligations. Considered in this light, these disquisitions have their fitting place in the Socratic system, nor are they without a real value of their

own. The objects aimed at are that of defending the cultivation of family and friendly affections and of other altruistic feelings before the cold scrutiny of reason, and that of supporting the *unity of the will* by the more or less well-founded doctrine, that conflicts between the claims of society and those of private interests are merely apparent. By this means, though it may be impossible to create new motives for good action, those which already exist may be reinforced on the intellectual side, and shielded from the attacks of the anti-social spirit. It matters little that in a first attempt of this character more stress should have been laid on the coarser, more palpable, and more superficial utilities than on those of a finer order, which at the same time are more indirect and more persistent in their operation.

But the treatment of ethical questions from the standpoint of reason has other uses of far deeper significance. Goodness or benevolence of sentiment does not spring from reflexion. It is the fruit of innate tendency, of education, of environment. Logical demonstrations cannot call it into existence. But supposing they find it already existent, they can do something to guide its operation. Not ignorance so much as confusion of thought is the enemy to be overcome. And this is the enemy on which the dialectic of Socrates made unceasing war. In this struggle the endeavour after sharply defined ideas could not but render yeoman's service. Though clearness of concepts is not enough to create new motives, it is enough to prevent or retard the invasion of the soul by those motives which, like certain fungi, thrive only in semi-obscurity. How many an action, injurious to the common welfare, would have been left unperformed, had not a veil of misty thought concealed from the doer of it the fact that it belonged to a class of actions admitted by himself to be reprehensible. This remark applies to various doubtful practices which are justified by the so-called ethics of business, and to various actions prejudicial to the interests of the state, which latter is regarded by preference as an abstraction rather than as a collectivity of sentient human beings.

We are reminded of the fine saying of J. S. Mill: "If the sophistry of the intellect could be rendered impossible, that of the feelings, having no instrument to work with, would be powerless." And apart from all the confusion of thought that haunts the individual brain, what a list could be made of questions in respect of which the general mind is in the same ill plight! Could Socrates appear among us, how often and how victoriously would he cross swords in dialectic fence with the representatives of public opinion! Imagine the smile of scorn with which he would drive the legislator to confess that duelling is both commanded and forbidden to the same persons at the same time! How he would enjoy proving that precisely similar incidents are judged differently according to the section of society in which they take place! How he would scourge a system of education which implants in our youth, sometimes simultaneously, sometimes consecutively, mutually exclusive ideals of life! With what pleasure would he drag into the light of day all the glaring contradictions in which journalists and politicians daily entangle themselves, whenever they speak of such things as "political morality" or the "sanctity of treaties"! We can hardly be wrong in assuming that his efforts to promote the sharp delimitation of concepts, and to dispel all the dark clouds of confusion and contradiction that beset the mind of man, were of more than theoretical importance; that, in fact, they bore rich fruit in the world of practice. If among the ancient philosophers who came after Socrates there appeared a great number of men distinguished by singleness of heart and purpose, if ideals which, though open to criticism, were yet of the highest value, came to be cherished with impressive perseverance and practised with magnificent consistency in the schools of the Cynics, the Cyrenaics, the Stoics, and the Epicureans, it is to the mental discipline instituted by Socrates that these results must largely be ascribed.

So much for the work of Socrates on the foundations of morality, and the critical investigation of concepts, which was closely bound up with it. We now come to the

content of the Socratic ethics. Here, however, our survey must enlarge its scope. The regulation of individual conduct goes hand-in-hand with that of social practice. It is not with ethics alone, but with ethics and politics combined, that we have now to deal. It is true that a fully elaborated system of Socratic doctrine is to be looked for in neither of these departments. But the spirit in which he discussed the totality of these questions can be inferred without ambiguity from certain features which are common to the theories of his successors, and which are in the closest possible agreement with the few well-attested details of his personal teaching which are known to us.

"That is, and ever will be, the best of sayings," says Plato, "that the useful is the noble, and the hurtful is the base." The usefulness and the hurtfulness here spoken of have reference to the community, and the "enthusiasm of sobriety" that dictated these words of the poet-philosopher assuredly glowed with a yet stronger fire in the bosom of his teacher, the apostle of the intellect. He will not hear of any good thing which is not also good, that is, useful, to some person. "A dung-basket that fulfils its purpose is more beautiful than an unserviceable shield of gold." This is one of the sayings of Socrates reported by Xenophon, one of those pungent sentences which the author of the "Memorabilia" was absolutely incapable of inventing for himself, and of which there is no good ground for doubting the authenticity. Be that as it may, the promotion of human welfare was certainly, in the opinion of Socrates, the supreme canon of social and political practice. And subserviency to this same highest end was in his eyes the one standard by which to judge of the goodness or badness of actions. But he made no attempt whatever to construct synthetically a system of cardinal obligations. Here, just as in the inquiry into the nature of individual happiness, he was not ambitious enough to undertake either the ultimate analysis of the foundations or the erection of a superstructure of positive dogma. Nor did he essay the delimitation of the respective spheres of the individual and the community. All this he left to his successors.

Utilitarian ethics, or, as we prefer to say, the ethics of consequences, may be confidently ascribed to Socrates. Usefulness or expediency is the guiding star of his thought on political, social, and ethical questions. He may be termed the founder of that intellectual radicalism which, on the one hand, is without price as an implement of criticism and as an offensive weapon against what is worthless in existing institutions, but which, on the other hand, may on occasion be dangerous and disastrous when it insists on the immediate or the violent fulfilment of its demands, which latter are, after all, in any particular case, nothing more than the pronouncements of fallible human minds. Reason before authority, utility before tradition or blind emotion—such is the battle-cry in the campaign prepared, but only partially conducted, by Socrates. He himself remained to a considerable extent under the sway of the traditional sentiments of his countrymen. The fundamental principle for which he strove to win recognition was the supremacy of enlightened reason. Here again we discern shadow as well as light. There can be little doubt that the recognition of this principle was calculated to loosen many a bond of duty and affection. The reproach was urged against it, hardly without reason, that it provoked children to rebel against the "unreasonable" will of their parents, that it commended wisdom rather than age to the reverence of the young. Respect, too, for existing political institutions could not but be greatly impaired by the trenchant criticism to which he subjected them.

It was in particular the appointment of officials by lot against which, as we have already remarked in anticipation, he was never weary of inveighing. He thus worked for a future in which special or expert knowledge, to him and his followers the most precious thing in the world, was destined to play a greater part in state administration than it did in the Athens of his day. For all that, his criticism is not to be endorsed without reserve. Offices of cardinal importance were neither then nor at any other time filled by lot. And against the undoubted drawbacks of the system we may set certain mitigating circumstances and

certain positive advantages. Under the first head may be placed the short tenure of office by individuals, the great number of officials composing each separate board, the dread of exposure which kept the incompetent from participation in the lot-drawing which led to the more important offices, such as membership of the hard-worked council of five hundred. Still more weight must be attached to the diffusion of political education thus brougth about, and the strengthening of public spirit. Lastly and chiefly, the party divisions of the little commonwealth, dangerous as they actually were, would have been far more disastrous had it been the custom for the victorious party to take possession, by virtue of its majority, of every branch of the administration, thus aggravating in fatal measure the contrast between victor and vanquished. As it was, this contrast was greatly softened by the privilege, accorded to the minority for the time being, of co-operating in the public service. On the other hand, Socrates was in complete agreement with modern sentiment when he combated that prejudice against free labour which is almost inevitable in every slave state; when he, a son of the people, showed himself more radical than Plato or Aristotle, by refraining from all depreciation of "banausic" callings. He held, and this accorded well with his high estimate of the number of things that can be taught, that the female sex was capable of higher developments than the great majority of his countrymen thought possible. It would at least be a strange freak of chance if the concordant utterances on this subject of Plato, Xenophon, and Antisthenes, all of whom reject qualitative differences of mental endowment in the sexes, did not flow from a common source.

But we must not lose ourselves in details. The main point is the emphatic assertion of the rights of criticism as against all authority and all tradition, the measurement of all institutions, ordinances, and precepts by a single standard—their fitness, as ascertained by experience and reasoned reflexion, to promote the welfare of mankind. This standard is no doubt one whose application in human, that is to say, in fallible hands, often leads to error; still,

all the philosophers of two thousand years have failed to provide us with a better. Utilitarianism, its advantages, the misapprehensions which prevent its being fully understood, the real or apparent objections which may be raised against it,—all these subjects will receive attention in a later portion of this work, where we shall deal with the more pronounced form of the fundamental doctrine given to it by the successors of Socrates. It will then be necessary to unravel the confused tangle of eudæmonistic, hedonistic, and utilitarian theories, with their sub-varieties. For the present, a single observation will suffice. It is quite possible to reject utterly individual eudæmonism as the basis of morals, and yet at the same time to hold firmly to social utility as the supreme standard in ethics and politics. It is possible to abandon even this standpoint—though for our part, in spite of the captious objections which have been raised against it, we know of no adequate substitute—and yet retain the method according to which every institution, every precept, every rule of conduct, is considered as a means to some clearly conceived end, and tested in respect of its appropriateness thereto. He who cleaves to this method is at once on Socratic ground and within the limits of rational investigation. Wherever two or three are met together—it may be said—to discuss human concerns by the light of reason, there is Socrates among them.

4. It was not directly, but through the medium of his intellectual children, grandchildren, and still remoter posterity, that Socrates exerted, upon wide circles of men and upon distant ages, an influence which at every step received accretions from collateral sources. It was very different with a man of the far East, a kindred soul and almost a contemporary of Socrates—Confucius (died 478 B.C.), who is honoured by the inhabitants of the Middle Kingdom and the neighbouring regions as the founder of their religion, and whose writings, regarded as canonical, offer many points of resemblance to the utterances of Socrates. "The extension of knowledge," we read in the thirty-ninth book of the Lî Kî, "is by the investigation of things. Things being investigated, their knowledge became

complete. Their knowledge being complete, their thoughts were sincere. Their thoughts being sincere, their hearts were then rectified. Their hearts being rectified, their persons were cultivated. Their persons being cultivated, their families were regulated. Their families being regulated, their states were rightly governed." Thus Confucius. On this passage, a critic of high authority, Georg von der Gabelentz, expresses himself as follows: "We see that where he might be expected to treat of conscience, he speaks of knowledge and its perfecting. It is as if he regarded morality as an affair of the intellect, and as something which can be taught." And as basis of the latter, Confucius gives a logical deduction of ethical obligations, starting from the happiness of the agent; consequently, he has, as a matter of fact, not escaped the charge of eudæmonism. But the superstructure built on this foundation is a species of altruism free from extravagance or quixotism. "Love one another;" "Requite good with good, and evil with justice;" "What thou wouldst not that another should do to thee, that do not to another;"—such is the tenor of some of his admonitions. And that eudæmonism provided ethics with a foundation which made up in solidity what it lacked in elevation. For example, in a Chinese State paper of the ninth century of our era we read the following sentences: "May it please your majesty! I have heard that he who eradicates evil himself, reaps advantage in proportion to his work; and that he who adds to the pleasures of others, himself enjoys happiness. Such was ever the guiding principle of our ancient kings." By happiness is here meant that which can be enjoyed upon earth, for with the Chinese moral philosophers of the Confucian school all outlook upon a hereafter of rewards and punishments is entirely lacking. Both in this respect and in the attitude of indecision towards the question of immortality there is a close parallel with Socrates, who is made by Plato, in the "Apology," to confess his entire uncertainty as to the nature of death. Again, the pious Xenophon, herein doubtless influenced by the Master, puts into the mouth of his dying hero, Cyrus, all manner of

proofs of immortality, which, however, only lead up to halting utterances on the continued existence of the soul.

This scepticism was by no means confined to Socrates. There is still preserved a fragment of a memorial inscription in honour of those who fell at Potidæa. If Socrates, who also took part in that campaign, had cast his eye upon this inscription, he would have seen in the line, "Then by the earth his body, his soul was received by the ether," what one might almost call an official rejection of personal immortality. For the faith upheld by Mystics and Orphics had in that age no firm hold on the mass of the people, and needed to contend perpetually with unbelief. That belief, that the soul returns to the ether as the body to the earth, was held by Socrates' friend Euripides, as by the philosophical comedian Epicharmus before him. That which was called in question was the personal, not the conscious, survival of the soul; for the ether, or heavenly substance, was conceived as the vehicle of a world-soul identified with the supreme Deity. But Euripides would not have been Euripides if in this one instance he had held firmly to a definite conviction instead of allowing it on the whole to preponderate over its opposite. By the side of this pantheistic faith, his dramas exhibit complete uncertainty on the destiny of souls; indeed, hopes are held out of a final extinction of consciousness. Vacillation of this type, coupled with a progressive weakening of the belief in the soul, seems to have been the prevailing note of the latter part of the fifth century. Even in quarters where no doubts were admitted as to personal survival, there was little recognition of the dignity or the blessedness of the departed, and it was nowhere maintained with confidence that they had any part in the events of the earth. The literary evidence of this trend of thought is instructively supplemented by the monuments. The oldest Athenian graves, which date from about 700 B.C., testify to the strength of the belief in souls and the high honour in which souls were held, by the abundance and splendour of the gifts buried with the dead, as well as by the arrangements indicating memorial sacrifices. In the course of

time we notice a gradual fading away of these feelings. The love-gifts do not cease, but at the time when monuments are artistically most perfect, they are distinguished by an almost mechanical uniformity. At the end of the fourth century all wealth of ornamentation entirely disappears; the limitations of funeral expenses enacted by Demetrius of Phaleron are obeyed with ready compliance, even at a time when they had ceased to be enforced. The responsibility of this change may without injustice be laid on the decay of the belief in souls, as well as on the impoverishment of the people.

5. There were other matters of faith in which Socrates held a middle position. He was neither an atheist nor a pillar of orthodoxy. So much, at least, seems certain, though there is great doubt on particular details. The accounts of Socrates' trial and death bear witness to his deep religious feeling. He regarded himself as devoted to the service and as under the protection of the Deity. But the exact nature of his theological belief cannot be stated with certainty. That the gods of mythology were the objects of his personal adoration is *a priori* improbable. Had his standpoint been simply that of the popular religion, the indictment laid against him could hardly have received the form it did, or his accusers would not have succeeded in winning several hundred Athenian jurors to their side. In the other trials of a similar character, such as those of Diagoras, Anaxagoras, and Protagoras, evidence against the accused was supplied by their own writings. It is not likely that in this one instance definite testimony was dispensed with, and its place taken by mere hearsay. And it may be observed that the answer given in Plato's "Apology" to this part of the indictment is particularly weak. In fact, it seeks to veil the impossibility of meeting the main point by various forensic makeshifts. The accuser is nonplussed by cross-questions and surprised into pushing his contention far beyond its original scope, thus affording an easy handle for attack; the rest of the reply is made up of inconclusive linguistic and logical artifices. We must consider, too, that the standpoint of popular mythology was one which had

long been regarded in philosophical circles as untenable, and, what is still more important, that this dissent was afterwards a feature of all the different Socratic schools, though it appeared in the most diverse forms. Nor is it a fact without significance that the individual deities to whom he is represented by Plato as praying or otherwise rendering acknowledgment, or whose existence he is said to have maintained with any energy, are none other than, on the one hand, Apollo, the lord of the Delphic sanctuary, where lofty wisdom and advanced ethical culture had their seat, and, on the other hand, the Sun and Moon, that is, those very parts of the natural world which Plato and Aristotle continued to regard as divine entities.

What Socrates requires of the gods, or of the deity, is simply "the good." Wherein this consists, in any individual case, the gods, so he thinks, know better than men. To ask from them definite goods or help in securing definite ends, seemed to him as out of place as we might have expected *a priori* that it would seem to an ethical philosopher who would fain see man firmly planted on his own base, that is, on his powers as conditioned by his knowledge, as independent as may be of everything external. Thus he put but little value on details of cultus, and bade men worship the deity without extravagance or over-refinement, in simple fashion, "according to the laws of the state," in agreement with the pronouncement of the Delphic oracle. In the "Euthyphro" of Plato Socrates is represented as pouring out the full vials of his scorn on all holiness resting on works and on all sectarian fanaticism, and as coming to the sufficiently clearly expressed conclusion that piety is rather a disposition accompanying just actions—with which latter it is identified elsewhere in Plato—than an independent virtue embracing a particular circle of duties. That a pure heart is more pleasing to the deity than abundance of offerings, is a declaration which is put in the mouth of Socrates by Xenophon, who, on this subject, was far removed from the standpoint of his master.

Not essentially different was the attitude of Socrates towards the arts of divination. Xenophon, who had

himself a strong leaning towards these arts, reports him as censuring men for going to the gods and the interpreters of their signs for counsel on matters which they had the power of knowing and doing for themselves.

One exception to this hostile attitude regarded the Delphic oracle, that sanctuary which had already won the sympathy of Socrates by the inscription on its wall, "Know thyself," afterwards one of his favourite sayings. Like the overwhelming majority of his contemporaries, he saw in dreams manifold instances of divine intervention. But what are we to say of the famous δαιμόνιον, that is, of that voice of a god or a spirit, which played a part of no small importance in his life? Could we credit Xenophon, Socrates claimed for himself, on the strength of this voice, a prophetic gift of quite peculiar nature. He foresaw the future, and made use of his foresight to bid his friends do this, or leave that undone; whereupon it went well with those who followed his counsel, and ill with those who rejected it. The testimony of Plato is to quite another effect. He knows nothing of predictions, nothing of any positive commands addressed to Socrates, or any counsel transmitted by him to his friends. For him the phenomenon was one of still more peculiar type and much more limited scope. From early youth upwards it frequently happened to Socrates, both on important and on trivial occasions, that he was restrained from doing what he was on the point of doing, by compulsion from within, which compulsion he sometimes called "a voice" (at other times it is simply "the accustomed sign"), and attributed to a god or spirit as much because of his inability to explain it as because of the benefits he derived from obeying it. The divergency between the two accounts is highly instructive, and calculated to inspire us with a profound suspicion of Xenophon's testimony. He would have been well pleased to make Socrates into a kind of soothsayer or miracle-monger, and he was thus led, perhaps not to introduce downright inventions of his own, but to blur the true features of the case by additions and omissions, thus producing a picture which had just enough in common with

the reality to make the deception effective. But what are we to think of the δαιμόνιον? We can neither range it in the category of veritable premonitions, and compare it with Jung-Stilling's experiences of a continuous intercourse with the Deity, confirmed at every step by the fulfilment of expectations; nor can we agree with various ancient writers in considering it as merely the voice of conscience. The statement that the δαιμόνιον held him back whenever he felt any inclination to take an active part in politics, may be taken to indicate that he was here guided by a species of instinct, a dim but truthful estimate of his own capabilities emerging from the sub-conscious under-currents of psychic life. And perhaps a similar remark holds in respect of that incident in which the inner voice restrained him from complying with the wish of certain disciples who desired to renew the familiar intercourse they had previously broken off. In other cases this peculiarity of Socrates is employed by Plato in a half-jesting manner, as affording motives for actions of little importance, merely as an aid to dramatic effect in the construction of the dialogue. The discourse promised to the reader gains in interest if Socrates is represented as having been on the point of leaving the place where it was held, or of breaking off the conversation, and as having been detained only by a sign from his familiar spirit. Whether the warnings that arose from the depths of the unconscious took the form of actual hallucinations of the sense of hearing, or whether insignificant feelings of inhibition, such as we have all experienced, were also regarded by Socrates as instances of divine intervention, so that the δαιμόνιον became a common name for psychical processes of more than one kind—on such questions as these we are thrown back on conjecture, and are hardly in a position to formulate even a conjecture with any show of probability. We are nearly as helpless in the face of the highly important question which still remains to be considered, that of the nature of the Supreme Deity acknowledged by Socrates. That his position should have been a naïve acceptance of tradition, is a possibility which we are certainly entitled to neglect.

In reality, there are only two alternatives before us. The Supreme Deity of Socrates may have been, like that of Xenophanes, an informing mind or soul pervading the universe. Or it may be that he regarded the Deity as a Supreme Being, perhaps not the creator, but, at any rate, a power that orders and shapes the world in accordance with his own purposes. In other words, Socrates' conception of the Deity was either a pantheistic-poetical one, or a deistic-teleological. But merely to state these alternatives, we fancy we hear the reader exclaim, is to decide between them. Only the second of these modes of conceiving the Deity seems appropriate to the sobriety of thought and the utilitarian leanings characteristic of our sage. There is, doubtless, much plausibility in this view. But we do not admit that it is one to be immediately and finally adopted. An instance which lies close at hand will make plain the danger which lurks in such inferences. Suppose that the belief of Socrates in his spirit-monitor were only known to us by dim hearsay; how confidently might we not have rejected the story on the ground that all such mysticism is foreign to the nature of a man who was common-sense incarnate! Great men commonly unite within their natures elements of the most varied, even of the most contradictory, character; indeed, it is in such union that their greatness largely consists. If we undertake to construct the unknown part of a personality solely from the part revealed to us, we are like to introduce into the resulting picture more unity, but at the same time more monotony and tameness, than the truth would warrant. Within the Socratic School the idea of God assumed many different forms. Euclides, the founder of the Megarian branch, enthroned the All-One of the Eleatics; Antisthenes, the head of the Cynics, preached the sovereignty of a single God, conceived, it would appear, with more of the attributes of personality.

If it be asked which of the two disciples followed the master more closely, the question cannot be answered with any certainty. Aristotle is silent; Plato reports nothing, but pursues his own path, marked out for him by the doctrine of ideas; there remains the least valuable of our witnesses,

Xenophon. This author has devoted two much-discussed sections of the "Memorabilia" to the theological problem, which he answers in a teleological and almost exclusively anthropocentric sense. According to this evidence, Socrates regarded divine activity solely from the point of view of human utility. The two dialogues (with Aristodemus and Euthydemus) are full of allusions to the evidence of design contained in the structure of the animal, especially the human, body, and to the general ordering of nature in a manner conducive to the welfare of man; all of which allusions are aimed at the conversion of doubters and unbelievers by bringing home to them the fact of divine providence. The objections which have been raised against the genuineness of these chapters have proved to be without foundation. But it is still an open question whether their content is the intellectual property of Socrates or of Xenophon himself. Certainly no high degree of originality can be claimed for them. We have already met with kindred reflections in Herodotus (Vol. I. p. 267); and the problem of design is one which occupied both Anaxagoras and Diogenes of Apollonia. These thinkers, however, we may remark in passing, took too broad a view of the question to set down the whole animal kingdom as created for the service of man. There are several details in these chapters which suggest that the voice here speaking to us is that of the much-travelled Xenophon with his varied experiences and practical knowledge of the world, rather than that of his teacher Socrates. The latter, possibly, may be credited with the main thought, the purposeful operation of the Godhead or "universal reason;" the exposition, however, can hardly be his.

We shall probably not be wrong in passing a similar verdict on a portion of the argument by which Xenophon seeks to explain why Socrates made no attempt to continue the speculations of the nature-philosophers who preceded him. We should not, indeed, be disinclined to believe that the incurable discrepancy of the older systems passed in his mind for a proof that the problems they dealt with were insoluble (cf. Vol. I. p. 494). One denies all

rest, another denies all motion; one assumes a single universal substance, another an infinite plurality of substances. That, to his thinking, the champions of such glaringly contradictory theories proved nothing except the hopelessness of their common efforts, that their mutually destructive assertions, all of which were maintained with equal confidence, appeared to him as the utterances of men not wholly sane,—all this is possible enough. But it is not so easy to believe that in forming a judgment on the nature-philosophers an original thinker like Socrates stood on the same plane as the ordinary Athenian philistine; that in the labours of those hardy pioneers he saw nothing but inflated presumption and an unseemly trespassing on the preserves of the gods. Had this been Socrates' way of thinking, public opinion would hardly have confounded him to such fatal purpose with the infidel "heaven-searchers" and other representatives of the age of enlightenment.

CHAPTER V.

SOCRATES' END.

1. SOCRATES was nearing the threshold of advanced old age when the storm by which he had long been threatened burst over his head. The pent-up forces of deep ill will and sullen distrust which had long been accumulating in the breasts of his fellow-citizens, now found vent in an explosion which led to one of the most tragic events which have darkened the annals of human civilization. To judge rightly of this collision between a noble people and one of the noblest of its sons is a task of extreme delicacy. We shall endeavour, so far as is possible, to let the facts speak plainly for themselves, and to weigh their testimony with the strictest impartiality.

The dislike of the average Athenian for enlighteners of every kind, let them be called "sophists" or "heaven-searchers," is, if anything, too familiar to the reader. Socrates was not merely confused with the representatives of these types; he passed for the supreme example and pattern of them. We know this on the testimony of the comic poets—the men, that is to say, who both knew best what public opinion was, and who had the greatest power of influencing it. Some of their contemptuous and spiteful expressions have already been quoted; we have no intention of exhausting the list. But we may remind the reader that the same Eupolis who caricatured the so-called sophists in "The Flatterers" did not spare Socrates either, but placed him exactly on a level with Protagoras. Both alike are held up to derision because they spend their time

ruminating on the highest subjects, but yet stoop to the lowest expedients in order to satisfy their ordinary wants. But while the worst said of Protagoras is that he searches the heavens and fetches his food from the dust-hole, Socrates is represented as a guest who steals a soup-ladle. Nor is it a case of ill will on the part of a few individual writers of comedy. The number and the variety of the relevant passages which have been preserved (mostly by accident) is far too great to admit of any such hypothesis. In addition to Eupolis, we have to mention Teleclides, Ameipsias, and Aristophanes. To the first of these Socrates is odious as partly responsible for those dramas which in so many ways offended popular sentiment—the dramas of Euripides, the poet in whose house the book of Protagoras on the gods was read aloud. Ameipsias speaks of him as "the best among a few, but among many the most foolish; who studies everything but the means of obtaining a new cloak." In this same comedy, the "Connus," so named after Socrates' music-teacher, the chorus was composed of "thinkers" or "ruminators." We are reminded of the contemporary "Clouds" of Aristophanes (first produced 423), that venomous pasquinade in which the hero is not, as subsequently in the "Birds" (414), or in the "Frogs" (405), merely an uncouth bore whose companionship spoils the art of Euripides. The "thinking-shop" is rather the home of idle musing, of free-thinking heresy, a place where youths are trained in undutifulness, and in all the vulgar arts of lying and swindling. In view of all this heaped-up malice, we may well wonder that Socrates continued for a quarter of a century to live and work unmolested in a city where freedom of thought and speech was not a recognized principle. It is plain that the inherited tendency to intolerance, possessing as it did a ready weapon in the existing laws, was effectually counterpoised by the habits of life and thought distinctive of the age of Pericles. There must have been, we conjecture, some extraordinary circumstance or experience that fanned into fierce flame the spark which had smouldered so long. For such circumstances we have not far to seek.

The Peloponnesian war was over, and great had been the fall of Athens. Humiliation before external foes had been associated with the weakness caused by an embittered civil war. From the latter the Athenian Demos had emerged victorious (B.C. 403). But the state had been shaken to its foundations; the comparison between past and present forced itself with irresistible power on every eye, and filled every heart with grief and mourning. Men could not but search around them for the deeper causes of the fatal transformation, and endeavour to learn some useful lesson from the contemplation of their misfortunes.

We imagine we can hear the querulous voice of some aged Athenian, who has unexpectedly met a foreign friend in the market-place. "What!" says he, "you hardly recognize Athens in these empty streets, this desolate harbour? And little wonder. Our defeats, the loss of our navy, colonies, and tribute has made us a poor people, poor in hope as well as in everything else. If you want to see cheerful faces, go to Sparta. But you will find our proud conquerors bowing humbly before the Lord of fate and of its holy decrees. There Zeus is not dethroned, there Zeus has not made way for the 'King Vortex' our celestial wiseacres talk about so much. The Spartans would soon put in force their 'act for the expulsion of undesirable aliens' if rogues of that stamp came among them. Look at us, and look at the difference. Our young men are as bold as you can possibly imagine; all religious fear has vanished long ago. And it is all the fault of the new-fangled philosophy-teachers. True, Anaxagoras was accused of impiety a generation ago, and sent out of the country; Protagoras the same. But the worst of them all is here still: Socrates goes on in the same old way, just as if Aristophanes (he's one of the right sort) had not exposed him twenty years ago. And what a conceit the man has of himself by now! Only the other day King Archelaus asked him to court along with all our best poets, and he declined the honour with his usual modesty—which I call arrogance. And then there are young foreigners from Megara, Elis, Thebes, and as far off as Cyrene, all coming

to him to benefit by his instruction. Yes, instruction; for though he hates to be called a teacher or sophist, the distinction is much too fine for our poor comprehension. There he sits, in his dirty little house, with his scholars all round him, and reads out of yellow rolls, and explains to them, after his own fashion, the works of poets and sophists. He lives mostly on presents from his well-to-do 'friends' or 'companions.' As for his boasting that he knows no difference between rich and poor, and is at the disposal of all alike,—so much the worse, say I. The other sophists dispense their poison only when they are well paid for it; he scatters it abroad gratis. And would to God he had done nothing worse than waste time and brains on the silly problems we split our sides over when the 'Clouds' was on the stage. If only he could have stuck to counting the flea-lengths between Chærephon's eyebrow and his own bald patch, that would not have mattered so much. But he has taught young men to beat and bind their 'unreasonable' fathers. He has shaken their faith in the gods. Talk to the son of the Thracian woman, the bastard Antisthenes, or to Aristippus of Cyrene, and they will soon tell you they consider Athene, the goddess who protects our state, as a mere name, an empty phantom. Some of these disciples believe in no gods at all, others in only one. Who knows whether it is not our putting up with such wickedness that has made our patroness angry and caused all our disasters?

"You don't think it likely a mere talker should have done all this harm? It's all simple enough. His hair-splitting subtlety attracts all the best brains among our young men, just as surely as the Lydian stone does a bit of iron. These are the men he sets against religion and makes into enemies of their country. I exaggerate, do I? Then listen to the facts, not to me. What greater misfortune have we had in all those years of war than the mad attempt to take Syracuse and conquer Sicily? And who is responsible for that lunacy, which cost us thousands of our best citizens? The 'fair son of Cleinias' (Socrates' complimentary name for him), who seduced the people into

neglecting all the warnings of our wise and pious Nicias; yes, that favourite disciple Alcibiades, who also had a share in the impious mutilation of the Hermæ, and in the insulting of the mysteries, and who finally went to Sparta and intrigued against his country from there. And that is not all. Just as Alcibiades destroyed our sea-power, Critias destroyed our internal peace. Certainly he had talent. But how did he use it? In his tragedy 'Sisyphus,' which was not allowed to be performed, but which went about from hand to hand in a great number of copies, he called belief in the gods an invention of clever men of old times. And his life was in tune with his teaching. While here, he was the people's worst enemy. In banishment, he stirred up the Thessalian peasants to revolt against their masters. And after his return what havoc he and his crew made in the city! And again I ask—Where did Critias get his fine principles from, he and his gang? They were all of them 'companions' of Socrates. But let him rest in peace, he and his cousin Charmides, both of whom fell fighting against the people. Enough of him. But let us not forget his great-nephew Plato, another favourite of the sophist, who does nothing but make speeches running down our ancient and glorious constitution and the sovereignty of the people. Only the other day I heard him deliver himself of the remarkable sentiment that things will never be better till the philosophers are rulers or rulers philosophers. Perhaps he too will go abroad some day to seek his ideal, just as his contemporary, the son of the knight Grylus, has lately done. Haven't you heard that Xenophon, instead of serving his own country, has preferred to go to Asia to Cyrus the Persian pretender, the same Cyrus who favoured our enemies, the Lacedæmonians, so greatly? And who do you suppose it was that encouraged him to consult the Delphic oracle, and take its permission to go over to the national enemy? Who else but his intimate friend, the grey-headed old wiseacre with the Silenus-face and the everlasting ironical smile. It's about time to put a spoke in his wheel. You think we might let the old cinder burn itself out; that it won't light

any more bonfires in young heads? Perhaps not. But think of the example. What will all the young set do when they see their chief going on with his work to the end undisturbed, and ending his days in peace and honour? The affair would be simple enough if the Areopagus had not lost its old rights; it would just order him, fair and square, to let the young men alone. But now there's nothing for it but to have Socrates up before the jurors. And one of our best men, Anytus, who was once a rich manufacturer, but has sacrificed the best part of his property in his country's cause, has actually taken the matter up, and intends to lay an indictment against him. Once let this be given out in the King Archon's court, and we shall soon see the old man follow the example of Anaxagoras and Protagoras. It won't cost him many tears to leave his scolding Xanthippe; he will take himself off and end his days at Corinth, or Thebes, or possibly at Megara, where they say he has plenty of devoted friends. But let him go where he likes; Anytus will show the same tireless energy as when he fought with Thrasybulus against the aristocrats, and he will not rest till he has seen the thing through. They say he has already made sure of two good helpers, Lycon the orator and Meletus the poet, who will very likely get more glory out of this affair than out of his trilogy on Œdipus. What could he have been thinking of to go and challenge comparison with the incomparable Sophocles, or even with Euripides, with whom he has little in common beyond the smooth-brushed hair hanging down over his cheeks? His hawk nose, his stubby beard, his leanness—— But here am I standing talking, and the flag on the Senate-house flying already. I must be off and get to my place in the council if I want my day's wage. Socrates isn't going to lose me my drachma on the top of his other crimes."

Events did not wholly fulfil the predictions of our worthy councillor. Anytus, indeed, whom Plato represents in the "Meno" as a fierce hater of the sophists, led on by his own zeal and backed up by his supporters, did not fail to bring in an indictment, which ran as follows: "Socrates

is guilty because he does not acknowledge the gods which the State acknowledges, but introduces other new divinities; he is further guilty because he corrupts the youth. Punishment demanded: Death." But the accused, against whom no warrant had been issued, falsified the expectations of both friend and foe by obeying the summons to appear.

2. It was a fine spring morning in the year 399 B.C. The dewdrops glittered brightly as on other days in the cups of the anemones, the violets shed their wonted fragrance. But that day's sun was not to reach its meridian height before an unholy deed had been accomplished. It was not a holiday in the legal calendar. Great numbers of Athenians, for the most part aged and of slender means, had risen early that morning. They desired to do service as jurors, for which office they were qualified by their more than thirty years of life, their unspotted record, and the taking of the juror's oath. Ignorant what tasks awaited them, they betook themselves, armed with their jurors' tablets, to the office in the market-place where the lots were drawn. There they were distributed among the different courts, and before it was yet well light were on their way to their destinations, each carrying a staff which he would find matched in colour by the lintel of the entrance-door. Arrived there, they exchanged their staves for tokens, the production of which at the end of the day's proceedings entitled them to their fee of three obols (fourpence-halfpenny) each.

Five hundred and one of these jurors had drawn a fateful lot. When the wicket closed behind them they were informed that they were well and truly to try the cause of Meletus (for it was in his name that the indictment was laid) and Socrates. As the charge was one of impiety, it was the King Archon, an official chosen every year by lot, who had conducted the preliminary inquiry, and who now presided over the trial. The jurors took their seats on long benches covered with matting; accusers and accused faced them on two adjacent platforms. Outside the bar stood a numerous audience. There might be seen the massive brow of Plato, then a young man of eight

and twenty, Plato's brother Adeimantus, the haggard Critobulus and his father Crito, Apollodorus with his stern and penetrating gaze, accompanied by his brother Æantodorus. The elegant and fashionable Aristippus can hardly have been absent, or the more rugged figures of the Bœotians Simmias, Cebes, and Phædondas, or the curly-headed, young, and beautiful Phædo, or Antisthenes, his resolute face framed in shaggy hair.

The proceedings began with an incense-offering and a prayer pronounced by the herald. The clerk of the court read the indictment and the pleadings in reply. The president then invited the representatives of the prosecution to ascend the tribune. Meletus spoke first, with strong emphasis on his patriotic motives, and with no little display of rhetorical art; but his speech was not a success. Anytus and Lycon, who followed him, were more effective. The former disclaimed all personal animosity against the accused. He would have been well pleased, he declared, if Socrates had disobeyed the summons and left the country. But now that he had put in an appearance, an acquittal was undesirable, because it would encourage the disciples to follow their master's example. These "pupils" of Socrates and their various misdoings figured largely in the accuser's speeches. Of the evidence adduced by the prosecution we know nothing. It was now the turn of Socrates. He spoke, amid frequent and violent interruptions from Meletus, who was exasperated by his rhetorical failure, in simple, artless style. His speech was an improvisation, or was intended to resemble one. It was characterized by earnestness and dignity, by shrewdness and wit, by irony of the highest order, by absolute self-possession, and by the disdainful omission of all appeal to the indulgence or compassion of the judges. Apparently it made some impression, for when the jurors went to the tribune to deposit their voting-counters in the two urns which stood ready to receive them, it was found that the counters with holes in the centre, which stood for acquittal, were only thirty short of those with a thick axle through them.

The proceedings now turned on the assignment of a penalty. In this and similar cases, the accused had to propose an alternative punishment to the one demanded by the prosecution. Obviously this alternative proposal stood more or less chance of acceptance according to the submissiveness of the defendant and the magnitude of the penalty. In both points Socrates sorely disappointed the expectations of the favourable portion of the jurors. It was only with extreme reluctance, and after expressly declaring that he was yielding to the pressure of friends who, with Plato at their head, offered themselves as sureties for him, that he proposed to pay the modest fine of three thousand drachmas. At the same time, he protested in emphatic language, such as the representatives of the sovereign people were not accustomed to have addressed to them, against the justice of the verdict which had been recorded. The result was a great increase in the hostile majority. No fewer than 360 votes were cast for the penalty of death.

3. We have endeavoured to extract from Plato's immortal description those facts as to whose historical truth there can be no doubt. The "Apology" is not a verbatim report. Even the externalities of judicial procedure are described in a manner which suggests the adaptation of the truth to the exigencies of style. There is at least one palpable instance of this. Plato makes Socrates announce his intention of calling a witness for the defence; this witness is not heard of again. In all the forensic speeches of Attic orators which have been preserved to us, though each of them is reported as the continuous utterance of a single speaker, the examination of a witness is indicated by a formula of citation addressed to him, and the parenthetic insertion of the word "deposition," just as in other cases the reading of an extract from the statute-book is indicated by a similar use of the word "law." Plato adopts a different plan. Here, as elsewhere, he is unwilling to follow a set pattern; perhaps, too, he wishes to avoid all appearance of having aimed at exhaustiveness and minute accuracy. From the single instance, to which we have

alluded, of discrepancy between promise and performance, it seems only fair to assume that similar liberties have been taken in other particulars. For example, it does not appear to us very probable that the brother of Chærephon the above-mentioned witness for the defence, can have been the only witness called in the course of the whole trial. And in point of fact, there is a passage in the first speech of Socrates from which this conjecture receives strong confirmation. It is the passage where Socrates challenges Meletus to repair his former omission, and call as witnesses for the prosecution the fathers and brothers, there present in court, of the young men alleged to have been corrupted. They would, he says, be sure to give testimony in exactly the opposite sense to that expected of them, and would accord him their unanimous and enthusiastic support. This support is so strongly insisted on, and its probative force discussed at such length, that we cannot but conjecture that something more than a hypothetical incident is referred to. In other words, Plato has made use of this artifice, for stylistic or personal reasons, in order to avoid mentioning such evidence for the defence as actually was given in the course of the trial. But it is necessary to consider Socrates' speeches a little more closely and examine into their correspondence with fact.

There is not the slightest ground for doubting that Plato reproduces the genuine and original tone of Socrates' speeches. And the same may be said of the spirit in which the defence was conducted. Deviation from the historical truth in either of these respects could not be justified on the score of artistic freedom; it would have been an offence against art and duty alike. Moreover, the spirit and purpose of the defence is in the best possible harmony with all we know of the historical Socrates, as well as with the situation created by the indictment. No one would expect to find that Socrates had been anxious to save his life at any and every cost. But, on the other hand, nothing warrants us in assuming that he was resolute to die, either from fear of the infirmities of age or

from a desire to crown his career by martyrdom. The truth seems rather to be that life had no value for him unless he might be at liberty to live as he had always done, and to practise unhindered the peculiar calling he had chosen for himself. Within the limits thus indicated he was ready, as we learn from the "Apology," to make the substantial concession implied by his offer to submit to a fine. But from this position he is not to be moved so much as a hair's breadth; he will hear of no compromise; even the idea of a tacit agreement is repulsive to him. It cannot be denied that the course he took diminished the chances in his favour. But that it absolutely destroyed them is disproved by the smallness of the majority by which he was found guilty. There is one objection which may be raised, not without plausibility, against this view —an objection drawn from the defiant tone of the second speech of Socrates.

"I am conscious of no guilt. Not only do I deserve no punishment, but I feel myself worthy of the highest distinction it is in the power of the State to bestow—maintenance in the Prytaneum."

Certainly a convicted prisoner who uses this language seems to court rather than avoid the threatened penalty of death. But this utterance must be judged by the context. It immediately precedes the not inconsiderable concession contained in the proposal of an alternative punishment. If Socrates' strong and well-founded feeling of self-respect was not to be wounded by this proposal, and if no colour was to be given to the idea that he was accepting an implied bargain—the judges to forego the death-penalty, the accused to give up the practice of his calling—if Socrates was to provide against all such misapprehension, and at the same time avoid striking a heavy blow at his own dignity, it was necessary to redress the balance by a piece of self-assertion rising as much above the general level of the speech, as, in consenting to a penalty, he fell below it.

If we read the speeches for the defence with due attention, we cannot but admire the extraordinary display of forensic skill by which they are characterized, in spite of their apparent artlessness and simplicity of arrangement. To the main accusation—that of religious heterdoxy—it is clear that there was no valid answer. On the other hand, much had been laid to the charge of Socrates by the comic writers, especially Aristophanes, which could not only be truthfully denied, but could easily be shown to rest on confusion and misunderstanding. Accordingly, the refutation of these vague charges is placed in the forefront of the defence, and their substance ingeniously condensed into a formula of indictment to which precedence is given over that actually employed by the prosecution. The latter, too, is treated with considerable freedom. It is not quoted with complete verbal accuracy, as we see from a comparison of its authentic wording, which is preserved elsewhere, and as is indicated by the use of the phrase, "something of this sort." The object of the inaccuracy is to bring into greater prominence the part of the indictment which could be more easily met—the charge of corrupting the youth. The defence on the main count of impiety is handled on the principle, as old as Homer, of placing weak troops in the centre and supporting them on both sides by the more efficient portions of the army. Thus Socrates reserves the strongest argument in his favour, the appeal to the favourable disposition towards himself of the relatives of the young men said to have been corrupted, for the close of his speech. And in the theoretical treatment of the same charge we can trace the hand of a skilled advocate. We do not refer to the argument—valid for Socrates and Plato, but a transparent fallacy for us—that no one can intentionally make those with whom he comes into contact worse, because he would himself suffer the consequences of their deterioration. If that were so, there could be no thieves' academies, no fathers who bring up their sons to dishonesty, no mothers who devote their daughters to vice. In reality the profit which he who leads another astray derives, or hopes to derive, from

his pernicious work may often outweigh all prospective injury to himself; or, at any rate, influence the will more strongly because of its immediate nearness. Besides, the injury to character may be, or appear to be, partial, and such as not to affect the relations of the two parties. To Socrates, however, and to his followers the assertion in question was a true corollary of the more comprehensive doctrine that no one does wrong of his own free will, and that the virtues are one. It is not here, however, that we recognize the master hand of the advocate, but in the passage where Meletus—a man to whom popular favour was of the first importance, especially in the law courts—is driven step by step to the absurd admission that all the Athenians, with the exception of Socrates, are experts in education and busily occupied in promoting the moral improvement of the young.

We have thus abundant cause to admire the technical skill of the author—be he Socrates or Plato—of the defence. But our astonishment grows when we extend our survey, and, instead of regarding single passages, view the whole. Whether jurors or mere readers were to be influenced, the problem attacked was how to make the work of Socrates comprehensible to men whose grade of culture made it impossible for them to appreciate it in its true and original form. What strikes us first of all is the fact that there is in these speeches not a syllable of what, on the unimpeachable testimony of Aristotle, was the central feature of Socrates' activity—the investigation of concepts. His dialectic had two sides, which, to use a phrase coined by Grote, we may call the positive and the negative arm of his philosophy. To the great mass of his contemporaries the second of these two was much better known than the first. A master of the arts of criticism and debate, always ready with captious argument and insidious irony, always able to overwhelm his opponent with shame and confusion, —such, with the general public, was the unenviable reputation of Socrates; such was the character in which he had made enemies without number. But the "Apology" invests the unpopular figure of the controversialist with the

glamour of a religious mission. His passionately devoted friend Chærephon, now no more, went to Delphi, as his brother will presently depose, and received from the oracle the response that no man was wiser than Socrates. The latter was thrown into the deepest perplexity by this deliverance of the god, which stood in such sharp contrast with his own consciousness of ignorance. Surely Apollo could not lie; it became his duty to discover the hidden meaning of the divine pronouncement. It was a task from which there was no escape; hence his "wanderings," his attempt to probe the wisdom of all whom the world held wise—statesmen, poets, craftsmen. This pilgrimage had sown the seeds of hatred against him, and was the true origin of the present indictment. He had himself learnt from it the lesson that all other men were, like himself, destitute of real wisdom, but, in thinking themselves wise, suffered from a delusion from which he was free. This, then, was the purport of the voice from Delphi. The wisdom of man, so the Pythia meant to say, is but a pitiful thing; those are in the best case who —Socrates, for example—are fully aware of their lack of wisdom. Before we consider the effectiveness of this plea, we must examine into its foundation in fact. There are here two things which must be kept strictly apart—the response of the Delphic oracle itself, and its effect on the career of Socrates. Of the historical reality of the former we do not think there can be the slightest doubt. No one could credit Plato with the unprincipled folly of attempting to pass off an invention of his own for evidence given at a recent trial, with the object of influencing present and future opinion upon an event of great importance. But though the fact is clear of doubt, it is not easy to explain it in any satisfactory manner. Can it have been that the wholesome influence of Socrates' discourses had been recognized at Delphi, and esteemed so highly that it was thought advisable to help him by a declaration in his favour? Or had the sympathies of the aristocratically disposed priests of Delphi, been won by his scorn for the helplessness of popular assemblies and the democratic

government of ignorance? Or was it the deep reverence of Socrates for Apollo and his sanctuary, which at a time of religious doubt seemed to the guardians of the oracle worthy of a grateful recompense? Those are questions we shall never be able to answer. One thing, however, is sure: the use made of the oracle in the "Apology" is unhistorical. It is represented as having given the starting impulse to the whole of Socrates' public activity. But, before this activity began, how could anything be known of him at Delphi? He owed his reputation to his work, and it is in the highest degree improbable that the oracle should have admitted the claims of a totally unknown aspirant to wisdom. Nor is it conceivable that his dialectic genius was first roused into activity by that message. As a matter of history, it is not true that his dialectic was exclusively devoted to the purpose here assigned to it. But the question still remains undecided whether it is Plato or Socrates that here speaks to us. For in glancing back, even over one's own past, it is possible to fall into an error of perspective. It is possible to ascribe to a particular experience a significance which it did not possess, and an influence it never exerted. In this case, however, the more probable assumption is that Plato has deliberately employed a skilled artifice; that is, if any weight is to be allowed to the argument from effect to cause. For the effect of this presentation of the case might well have been very considerable. "This, then, is the truth," so might many an unsuspecting reader exclaim, "about that much-talked-of cross-questioning of Socrates. That in which we could see nothing but petulant malice, offensive and shameless quibbling, was in reality the outcome of profound modesty, a protest against excessive praise, and, before everything, a pious attempt to understand and justify a divine message." We are able to give a much more decided verdict on that portion of the defence which is devoted to the positive arm of the Socratic philosophy. Here, as we observe with not a little surprise, the apology is in contradiction not only with the estimate of Socrates formed by all his contemporaries, but, which is much more

important, with the central feature of his ethical teaching, as known to us on unimpeachable testimony. One portion of the "Apology" not only places in the foreground that testing of men's wisdom which Socrates undertook in consequence of the Delphic oracle, but makes it fill up his entire life. Another portion, however, of the same speech presents us with a totally different picture. Socrates still describes himself as devoted to "the service of the god," but the similarity of phrase conceals an entire change of meaning. Socrates now assumes the *rôle* of an exhorter and a preacher of virtue, one who addresses all he meets—foreigners and fellow-countrymen alike—and tries to persuade them to take thought for their highest interests, to leave the struggle for honour and wealth and devote themselves to the well-ordering of their own souls. We need not dwell on the improbability that such a Socrates should have been the original of the Socrates of the comic stage. It is enough to point out that all we know of his positive ethical teaching is in contradiction with this account of him. The doctrine "Virtue is knowledge" is quite irreconcilable with it. He who knows what is good, does it: he needs no exhortation; it is vain to address him in the language of persuasion or encouragement; instruction and the clearing up of his ideas are alone of use. We cannot, therefore, accept the passage in question as an adequate version of the facts. But it is just as far from being an arbitrary invention. Plato has substituted a "protreptic" purpose, as has recently been remarked, for the "protreptic" effect of Socrates' discourses. More exactly, what Plato makes out to be the direct result of conscious and deliberate effort, was in truth an indirect result, sometimes aimed at by Socrates and sometimes not. For the charm of his talk often fascinated even those who resisted it, diverted their interest from the externals of life, and induced them to occupy themselves with the highest and deepest matters. But that which produced these effects was formally an investigation of concepts. A writer who saw in the clearing up and deepening of conceptions an important aid to moral progress, and who wished to impart this conviction of his

to men who were unable to understand the connexion, might well light on the plan of suddenly metamorphosing the analyzer of morality into a preacher of morality. Plato here sacrifices accuracy of facts to accuracy of impression. He presents us with an adaptation of the truth, not with the truth itself, which, seen through the distorting medium of a limited intelligence, would have appeared in the shape of gross error. His procedure resembles that of a maker of telescopes who corrects the action of one lens by the addition of a second of equal but opposite curvature. And if, in either case, the correction turns out to be excessive, as may easily happen, the necessary imperfection of all things human must be held responsible.

4. The foregoing considerations preclude us from regarding the "Apology" as a perfectly faithful reproduction of the speeches actually delivered in court. With the means at our disposal, it is impossible to establish a clear division between what is truth and what is fiction. But there are two points which should not be forgotten. No ancient author saw any harm in transforming or embellishing the speeches of his hero, or in bringing them nearer to his own ideal of perfection. In Plato's political theories, the "useful lie," employed as medicine, plays a considerable part; and it would be strange if this principle had not affected his practice as an author, or if he had allowed the flow of his eloquence to be checked by scruples regarding verbal truth. On the other hand, neither he nor any of the companions of Socrates would have thought it other than a disloyal and presumptuous act to ignore altogether the actual speech of the master in his own defence, and substitute for it newly invented matter. We are thus compelled to recognize the coexistence of truth and fiction in the "Apology," and to renounce all hope of completely separating them. All that we can maintain with any confidence is that the artistic structure of the whole work is due to Plato, and that the second speech, which is both the shortest of the three and the most closely bound up with the course of the trial, contains the greatest proportion of genuine Socratic property.

In one sense, perhaps in the highest sense, the whole of the "Apology" may be called the property of Socrates. The intellectual and artistic qualities of this work are no doubt important enough, and we have been obliged to devote considerable attention to them. But more important still is the greatness of soul which gives colour and coherence to the whole marvellous creation. This is still more characteristic of Socrates than of Plato. The mixture or rather the intimate fusion of sober sense and fervid enthusiasm, the disdain of all externals, the faith in the victorious might of reasoned thought, the firm conviction that the "good man" is proof against all strokes of fortune, the cheerful confidence with which such a man goes his way and suffers neither fears nor hopes to divert him from the fulfilment of his task,—all this has made the "Apology" a lay breviary of strong and free spirits, which even now, after twenty-three centuries, moves men's souls and kindles their hearts. It is one of the most virile books in the whole of literature; few others are so well adapted to foster the manly virtue of self-possession. It is difficult to place in the right light the relation of this work to religion. There is much concerning the gods in it; but of servile feeling towards the gods, of fear of them, or δεισιδαιμονία of any kind, there is as little as in the didactic poem of Lucretius. The divine voices whose strains reach our ears are in truth a chorus, and they accompany, but do not overpower, the leading part, the personality and the conscience of Socrates. The characteristic quality of the work is manifested most clearly in the final speech, delivered by Socrates after sentence of death has been passed. This is the portion of the work which we should naturally be most ready to regard as an addition of purely Platonic origin; yet it is the part in which the true Socratic tone is best preserved. The question of immortality is raised, but left perfectly undecided. The two possibilities are discussed: either there is a continued existence of the dead, or death is like a deep, dreamless sleep; but neither alternative is accorded any preference. On whichever side the reality may lie, in neither case is death to be called an evil. And that

is not all. In the passage where the possibility of a future existence is faced, the picture of the life to come is stripped equally of its gloomy terrors and of its more than earthly raptures. There is nothing here of those joys of heaven or those torments of hell which Plato describes so often in his other writings.

The imperturbable composure which marked Socrates during his life accompanies him in his passage to the world beyond. There, in spirit, he consorts with the semi-divine heroes of the early world as with his own friends and equals; he cross-examines them, and promises himself no little pleasure and instruction from their replies. With the like genial humour he congratulates himself on the fact that, in Hades at least, freedom of thought cannot be a crime visited with capital punishment. How to meet death cheerfully is a lesson which has been learnt from the "Apology," even by those who do not believe that they thereby enter into the joys of Paradise.

It is possible that the example of Socrates may have produced even greater effects than his teaching. Every one knows that the execution of the sentence was delayed by the necessity of awaiting the arrival of the sacred ship from Delos, and that the condemned prisoner employed the respite in continuing his accustomed conversations with his disciples, and partly in versifying the fables of Æsop. This latter task he undertook out of deference to a divine command which, like many others before it, had been communicated to him in a dream. He was bidden to occupy himself with "music," that is to say, with some form of art. Perhaps here too we should see a suggestion emerging from the depths of the subconscious (cf. p. 88), and bidding him strive towards perfection by supplementing a deficiency of his natural endowment. How, when his last hour approached, he sent away his lamenting relatives, comforted his weeping disciples, exchanged a few friendly words with the jailor, and then quietly and calmly drained the cup of hemlock,—all this forms a picture which it would be wasted labour to paint anew, for it

stands, in colours ever fresh and vivid, in the pages of Plato's "Phædo."

5. As long as men live on the earth that day's trial will never be forgotten. Never will the voice of mourning cease for the man who first gave his life to the cause of free inquiry. Must we also regard him as a victim of fanatical intolerance? On this question opinions are still divided. There are some who never weary of denouncing that verdict as a judicial murder of the worst type, as an ineffaceable stain on the blazon of the Athenian state. Others, less numerous, take the part of the "law-abiding" as against the "revolutionary," and greedily seize on everything which seems to detract from the greatness of Socrates. We, for our part, are convinced that the fatal event was only in a small degree the outcome of prejudice and misunderstanding; that to a far greater extent and in decisive measure it was the issue of a fully justified conflict. Hegel, to our thinking, has rightly stated the merits of the case. Two views of life, one might almost say two phases of humanity, strove for mastery on that day. The movement inaugurated by Socrates was one destined to confer incalculable benefits on the human race; for the Athens of that day it was a doubtful blessing. The right of the community to assert itself and to combat disorganizing influences was in conflict with the right of a great personality to open new paths and enter upon them in bold defiance of rigid traditions and all the menaces of authority. This right of the individual will be doubted by far fewer among those to whom these pages are addressed than the antagonistic right of the State. "Was it not entirely unworthy of a civilized and highly cultivated people"—thus we can imagine many a reader exclaiming—"to violate in such gross fashion the right of free speech?" We answer that the right of free speech must be reckoned, because of its beneficent consequences, among the most precious possessions of mankind; but that it has nowhere and never existed absolutely without limit. In our own century it has found no warmer-hearted or more enlightened defender than John Stuart Mill. Yet this ardent advocate of

individual freedom is unable to avoid recognizing limits restrictive of it.

"No one pretends"—so runs a passage of that magnificent book, "On Liberty"—"that actions should be as free as opinions. On the contrary, even opinions lose their immunity when the circumstances in which they are expressed are such as to constitute their expression a positive instigation to some mischievous act. An opinion that corn-dealers are starvers of the poor, or that private property is robbery, ought to be unmolested when simply circulated through the press, but may justly incur punishment when delivered orally to an excited mob assembled before the house of a corn-dealer, or when handed about among the same mob in the form of a placard."

And how, we may ask, if the contents of the placard are made public in a newspaper, the day before the meeting? Or if the mob is not yet assembled, but may assemble at any moment? It is plain to all that the line here drawn is a fluctuating one, which varies according to the magnitude and the proximity of a threatened danger, and according to the efficacy and trustworthiness of the means of defence. In fact, no community, however penetrated its members may have been by a sense of the value and importance of free theoretic discussion, has gone so far as to allow such freedom always and in all circumstances, including those in which its vital interests were at stake And here we must remember the weakness of ancient states. Those little city-republics were weak in numbers, and doubly weak in the necessity they were under of guarding against the ever-threatening danger of attack by their neighbours. And that which in itself was an element of strength, the homogeneity of the population, might easily, from our present point of view, become an element of weakness. The diffusion of doctrines dangerous to the State may go a long way in our modern communities of large and moderate size before the decisive step from theory to practice becomes anything but a remote possibility. A considerable fraction of the population may be permeated by such doctrines, while other important

sections of it provide a powerful counterpoise. Consider the contrast between the agricultural class and the bourgeoisie, between the bourgeoisie and the proletariate. The contrasts of this type which existed in ancient Athens had lost much of their original sharpness through the wearing action of time and the efforts of great statesmen directed to this very end. The country population was subject to town influences. It was only in the not very frequent case of law-revision proper that the demes, or districts, were invited to anything like independent co-operation. The fate of Athens was decided daily on the Pnyx. That the continuance of a state and its institution depends in the last resort on the loyalty of the citizens is, of course, a universal truth. But it may be affirmed in a still more literal sense of ancient states. Any shock to the foundation of the State was immediately felt. It travelled unhindered from the base to the summit of the edifice. There were no intermediate elements to deaden the blow. The interests of the State lacked the protection afforded by the hereditary transmission of the supreme magistracy, by an organized military power and a system of public departments. Athens possessed no royal family, no standing army, no bureaucracy. All the greater was the need that the State should be able to count on the loyalty of the citizens. These consisted, as always and everywhere, of a small minority of leaders and a great majority of led. To the former category belonged chiefly those who could use most skilfully the weapon of the spoken word. This superiority, again, was acquired or enhanced by dialectical and rhetorical training. It is thus very intelligible that a master of dialectic who for several decades exercised a continuous influence on many of the most ambitious and the most capable of the rising generation, and who was at the same time the most original thinker of his age on ethics and politics, should become a political factor of no small importance, and a great power for good or evil.

That the influence of Socrates was regarded by wide circles of men as an influence for evil, is a fact which must be regarded as the common result of several different

causes. The shadow cast by Alcibiades and Critias, who grievously injured their country, upon the figure of their master may perhaps at first sight seem an unfortunate accident. For Xenophon is probably right in maintaining that, with Critias at least, the chief motive for seeking the society of Socrates was a desire for political power, and that in what relates to the growth of character neither he nor Alcibiades received any deep or lasting impression from him. But, apart from this, it is intelligible enough that among the many young men of high aims who chose this particular form of education, some few were found whose subsequent careers were disastrous to the State. That which might seem better to deserve the name of an unhappy accident is the circumstance that among those who did the State signal service there were none who had sat at the feet of Socrates. But the causes of this lie deeper, and are of twofold nature. The reader is familiar with the fact that Socrates was no friend of the existing democratic constitution, which did not harmonize with his doctrine of the supremacy of the intellect. Xenophon quotes the "accuser" (probably the Anytus of the work written by the *littérateur* Polycrates several years after the trial) as bringing the following charge, among others, against Socrates: "Socrates has made his companions despisers of the existing laws." To this charge Xenophon has no relevant reply to make. He merely denies that the master ever incited his disciples to "violent" attacks on the constitution. And there is a still more important point. It was not merely to the order of things then prevailing in their country towards which the friends of Socrates maintained an attitude of aloofness or unfriendliness, but towards that country itself as well. In this connexion Xenophon, by his life, provided more material for the accusation against his teacher than he was able to destroy by the whole of his writings on the side of the defence. And just as Xenophon was much in Persia and Sparta, Plato was almost more at home at Syracuse than in his native city. Antisthenes and Aristippus deliberately shunned public life, and in

the school of the former the "world-citizenship" of the wise man was preached in plain terms and made an article of faith. That the disciples were here following in their master's footsteps, no one will deny.

Nor are we left entirely to conjecture. It was matter of universal astonishment that, in spite of his great gifts, Socrates abstained from serving the State. Plato represents him in the "Apology" as urging in his defence the strange plea that "if a man really wishes to fight against injustice, his place is in private, not in public life." And this judgment is supported on the only possible grounds, the alleged uselessness of all such effort, the hopelessness of the political situation, the incorrigibility of the multitude. For this is the only possible meaning of Socrates' assertion that if he had taken an active interest in politics, he could not have reached an advanced age, that he would again and again have been compelled to risk his life in a conflict with the people from which the latter would have derived no advantage. And this, be it observed, is the very same people which served as model for Pericles' funeral oration. Surely, when this people had bowed beneath defeat and had been purified by suffering, it could not have been truly termed unmanageable material in the hands of a benevolent and wise artificer of states. It is difficult to think of these things without a feeling of profound regret. One of the noblest and most teachable of peoples is abandoned by a group of its best men, who coldly turn their backs upon it and declare all efforts for its improvement to be so much lost labour. But instead of wasting time in regrets, let us endeavour to understand. That Socrates and his friends were lacking in true and heartfelt love of their home, is incontestable. But the explanation is not that Socrates was, as Frances Wright said to Bentham, though in a somewhat different sense, an "icicle;" but that he was full of a different and a new ideal. "Knowledge" is not Athenian; "sober sense" is not Spartan; "courage" is not Corinthian. Where anything and everything is haled before the bar of reason, where no tradition is respected as such, but everything

is required to be justified by thought and reflexion, it is impossible that a local patriotism confined to a city of a few square miles should preserve all its ancient strength. Indifference towards that "corner of earth where fate had pitched one's body" was bound to be the result (though the alleged Socratic saying we have just cited from Epictetus may be apocryphal) where preoccupation with universal humanity thrust everything else into the background. It was the fate of philosophy from the very first to exert a disintegrating influence upon national sentiments and institutions. The reader will remember the much-travelled, deep-thinking, old minstrel whose trenchant criticism made an incurable breach in Greek life. At the point we have now reached in our historical exposition the contrast between philosophic criticism and national ideals may be said to have been both deeper and more notorious. It was the old narrowness, the old homeliness, the old warmth and strength of Greek life, which the philosophers now threatened to destroy. The morality of the understanding was quickly followed by the cult of world-citizenship. Behind the latter we descry a world-empire, and behind that again a world-religion.

Not that we have any desire to suggest that in the spring of the year 399, Anytus, Lycon, and Meletus looked so far ahead as all this. But if they had their doubts as to the affection of Socrates and his friends for their country and its constitution, if they saw in his reasonings and investigations of concepts a danger to the national religion and the whole national existence, and if they therefore resolved, at a particularly critical moment in Athenian history, to silence the spokesman of the new tendency, we ought neither to be greatly astonished, nor yet to attribute to these men any unusual depravity of heart or limitation of intellect. What they wished to do was to silence Socrates, nothing more and nothing less. In a modern state such an object might have been much more easily attained. The deprivation of a professorship, the institution of a disciplinary inquisition, or, in states

of more restricted liberty, an inhibition by the police, an expulsion, or an administrative transference; any one of these means would have served the purpose. But in Athens it was otherwise. None of these methods was admissible; nothing but a criminal trial could meet the situation. And the only handle which the law provided was a prosecution for impiety. The conservative spirit of the Athenian democracy had so far prevailed that the ancient and rigorous enactment, by which atheism was punishable with death, was not abrogated, but superseded by a more tolerant practice. We learn from Plato and Xenophon, who had no motive for misrepresentation, and would have greatly preferred to throw the whole responsibility for the fatal issue on the accusers and judges, that Socrates might easily have escaped death if he had liked. He was free not to appear before the court, and yet he appeared before it. He was free to propose the alternative penalty of exile, and there was every probability that such a proposal would have been accepted. And even if he did not wish to do that, he was free to avoid the penalty of death if he would have modelled his behaviour to some slight extent on the regular custom of defendants, and not entirely disdained to appeal to the pity of his judges. And lastly, even after sentence had been pronounced, it would have been an easy matter for him to escape from custody. Full preparations had been made, as Plato informs us in the "Crito," to assist him in his flight. But he was made of sterner stuff. He was one of those whose mission it is to force the thoughts and feelings of men into new channels. He would consent to no compromise. His resolve was firm and unalterable; either he would continue to teach or he would cease to live.

The stories which were told in later ages of the repentance of the Athenians, of a statue erected to Socrates, and of punishment meted out to his accusers, have long been recognized, chiefly on the ground of the chronological impossibilities involved in them, as pure fabrications. That to which the execution of Socrates really gave rise was a

series of literary duels. The literary presentment by Polycrates of the case for the prosecution was followed by a reply from the pen of that industrious and talented writer of speeches, Lysias. The subject continued to be a favourite theme for rhetorical exercises down to the late Roman age, from which a specimen, the "Apology" of Libanius, has been preserved to us. But the predominant feeling of the Athenian people is clearly manifested by the circumstance that, after the lapse of more than half a century, the statesman and orator Æschines could hope to advance the cause which he was then promoting by addressing the assembled people in the following words: "Again, men of Athens, you put to death Socrates the sophist, because it was proved that Critias, one of the thirty destroyers of the democracy, had been educated by him."*

The dead Socrates rose again, not only in the schools, but also in the writings of his disciples. They never wearied of introducing the person of their venerated master, visiting the market-place and the gymnasia, and holding converse with old and young, as had been his custom during life. Thus in very truth he continued to teach, even after he had ceased to live.

We must now turn our attention to the motley host of the Socratics, with their divisions and subdivisions. We begin with a man of little significance as a thinker, but of great interest as a witness and an historical authority—Xenophon.

* "In Timarchum," delivered B.C. 345.

CHAPTER VI.

XENOPHON.

1. XENOPHON possessed in rich measure the not unmixed blessing of personal beauty. It is a gift which, in the male sex, is apt to be associated with arrogance and self-complacency. Nor did the "wondrously fair" son of Grylus escape this misfortune. He remained for the whole of his life a dilettante, in Goethe's sense of the word, that is, a man who is always venturing on tasks for which he is not fully equipped. We must, however, allow an exception in the case of one of the fields of his many-sided activity. Xenophon was an expert in sport, as a hunter and rider; and the three minor writings which he devoted to his favourite pursuits (the works on hunting and riding, and the book entitled "The Captain of Cavalry") are really the best that he ever produced. Here, where he least affects the title, he is most of a philosopher. His observations on the psychology of animals, and the conclusions he drew from them, show much greater acumen than his disquisitions on philosophy and morals, or on history and politics. Further, the most valuable of the talents with which he was endowed, the gift of minute and accurate observation, here comes into play in the most delightful fashion. His love of nature, his simple and hearty joy in the doings of animals, make these works as agreeable reading as the best parts of his "Œconomicus," a book in which the quiet enjoyment of country life and labour produces much the same refreshing and invigorating effect upon us as the smell of newly turned earth.

Was it want of means or was it ambition that impelled him to leave these peaceful scenes and to enter upon a career of adventure? Most probably both. He was still in the twenties when he left Athens; he never returned, except, perhaps, to pay a flying visit, and he died abroad in advanced old age. At first he turned his face towards the East. Fame and riches might be sooner won there than in his native city. The long and harassing war had ended in defeat, and Athens had been immediately entangled in civic broils, in which Xenophon's party had been worsted. As it so happened, Cyrus, the younger brother of the Persian king Artaxerxes (Mnemon), a prince distinguished by great liberality, and possibly by other virtues, was at that moment raising mercenaries in Thrace and in Greece, with the view of contesting his brother's throne. By the good offices of a friend, Xenophon obtained an introduction to the Persian pretender at Sardis, and was received by him with the greatest friendliness.

We do not learn what position was assigned him at the court and in the camp. Can it be true that he was only expected to give the philhellenic prince the pleasure of his society, and perhaps exchange repartees at the royal table with the "clever and beautiful" Aspasia, one of the prince's morganatic consorts? Or was the Athenian's emphatic denial that he had ever undertaken to serve Cyrus in a military capacity only made because the Persian prince had recently been the consistent supporter of Sparta against Athens? In any case, his connection with Cyrus did give rise to some doubts in his mind on this score. And the way in which he silenced these scruples reveals to us a not very pleasing side of his character. Socrates, with whom Xenophon was familiar, and whose advice he used to seek at every turn, gave expression to the doubts we have mentioned, and recommended him to consult the Delphic oracle. The disciple followed his master's counsel in a manner which very properly caused the latter grave dissatisfaction. Instead of clearly stating what he designed to do, he inquired of the oracle which was the god from whom

he might expect to obtain by prayer and sacrifice a successful issue of his undertaking. This device of concealment, which the pious Xenophon did not shrink from employing in face of the Pythian tripod, is one of which we may be sure he did not fail to make abundant use in his relations with men, and in particular with his readers. And the road from concealment to deception is terribly steep. We may learn this from a rapid glance through the most famous of Xenophon's books, his narrative of his Persian adventures.

We know how that campaign speedily ended in disaster. Cyrus fell in the first battle he fought against his royal brother; the Greek mercenaries were soon afterwards deprived of their commanders by a trick of the satrap Tissaphernes, and the leaderless host of the "Ten Thousand" began that retreat, famous for the bold and successful conquest of countless difficulties, of which Xenophon himself wrote the history. The fresh, vivid, and graphic style of the narrative entitles this work to the highest praise. Moreover, it gives much valuable information on the manners and customs of the peoples through whose territories the Greeks passed, generally fighting their way, on their homeward march; and the lifelike vigour and the humour of the descriptions are truly delightful.

Unfortunately, there is a dark as well as a bright side to the book. That a writer of memoirs should lay particular emphasis on his own merit, that he should place his successes in a strong light and draw a veil over his failures, is, perhaps, not more than may be set down to ordinary human weakness. Of course, the man who writes contemporary history after this fashion sinks to a level of mediocrity far enough removed from all that is genuinely great in historical writing. But these and cognate faults attain, in Xenophon's "Anabasis," to a magnitude which is highly damaging to the character, not only of the historian, but of the man. In particular, he brings his own personality upon the stage in a manner which gives the impression of the most obtrusive self-glorification. Immediately after that dark day when the host of mercenaries was plunged in helpless confusion by the loss of its generals, Xenophon

emerges from the obscurity in which, with the exception of two passing references, he has hitherto studiously shrouded himself. He now comes forward like the sun rising in his splendour to scatter the shades of night. An encouraging dream has instructed him upon his mission. In the early morning he summons together first the inner, then the outer circle of officers, to whom he offers himself as leader, and is actually chosen by them to take the place of one of the five murdered generals. He then dons the handsomest accoutrements he can lay hands on—observe his pride in his personal appearance, and his anxiety to make effective use of it—and addresses the assembled army in a speech many pages long. Afterwards we have other speeches, reported with equal fulness, just as the first fateful dream is followed by another of the same kind.

There is an art of deception which produces false impressions without the use of many false statements. Of this art Xenophon was a master. His narrative has given rise to a widespread opinion, held in ancient as well as modern times, that he was the leader of the Ten Thousand in their retreat. And yet Xenophon nowhere affirms this by so much as a single word. According to the account he has himself given, the army possessed a democratic constitution ; important decisions were arrived at by a show of hands, and, as to the executive power, Xenophon was always one among several generals ; the man who really was in sole command for a time was not he, but Cheirisophus the Spartan. It was only in the last phase of the undertaking, when the retreat from Asia had been effected, that the majority of the survivors entered the service of the Thracian prince Seuthes under Xenophon, who was not the first in command, but the most influential of the generals. But he shows such skill in the grouping of facts ; he contrives with such logical consistency to ascribe to himself the initiative in every important resolution ; he places himself so persistently in the foreground of the narrative,—that the reader imperceptibly receives an impression which in reality is in flat contradiction with the author's own words. And this impression is strengthened by a number of petty

anecdotes such as are seldom related except of great men in positions of high authority, and scarcely ever by a great man of himself. A heavy snowfall surprises the army by night when encamped on the Armenian mountains ; men and beasts lie buried in the drifts ; Xenophon is the first to rise and warm himself by splitting wood ; others follow his example, presently light a fire, and thus save themselves and the rest from the imminent danger of freezing to death. Another time a foot-soldier in heavy marching order complains of the difficulty of climbing a toilsome hill ; Xenophon dismounts from his horse, thrusts the man out of the ranks, loads himself with his heavy equipment, and thus diverts the smouldering ill will of the company from the commander to the refractory comrade. Another artifice employed for the same purpose was the anonymous publication of his work. In his " Hellenica " Xenophon alludes to a description of the expedition in question written by Themistogenes of Syracuse. From the earliest times there has never been any doubt that what he referred to was his own book, and that the pseudonym thus assumed by him was either a purely fictitious name, or one borne by some complaisant comrade in arms. That such precautions were neither superfluous nor wholly successful may be gathered from the remarkable fact that the historian Diodorus wrote a tolerably exhaustive account of the retreat of the Ten Thousand without once mentioning the name of Xenophon till he came to the episode of Seuthes. Now, Diodorus, who wrote in the Augustan age, drew his materials from Ephorus, a younger contemporary of Xenophon, and both must have been familiar with the " Anabasis." Their silence is thus deeply significant. It was not the result of ignorance ; they were acquainted with the claims put forward by Xenophon, and they rejected them.

But the hollowness of these claims is evinced most clearly by the subsequent career of Xenophon himself, or rather by his total lack of a career. The marvellous achievement of that handful of Greeks, who succeeded in finding their way home from the heart of the Medo-Persian Empire, and, in spite of all the snares laid for them by the

Great King, marched from the neighbourhood of Babylon to the shore of the Black Sea, made a profound impression on contemporary opinion, not less as an admirable example of Hellenic resource and energy, than as a first revelation of the interior weakness by which the apparently resistless world-power was already affected. If Xenophon really was the leading spirit in that memorable undertaking, how was it that his talent for command, a talent which in those stormy days of Greek political life could never lack employment, lay fallow during the rest of his life? After he had spent a few more years in Asia Minor, serving the Spartan king Agesilaus in apparently no very exalted capacity, he returned unpromoted to Greece, and presently (he had in the mean time been condemned to banishment from Athens) fought at Coronea in the army of Agesilaus, who was opposed on this occasion by an Athenian contingent as well as by the Thebans. He now disappears into the obscurity of private life, from which he never again emerges except as a versatile and prolific author.

Here begins the happiest part of his life. The patron he had hoped to find in Cyrus had been found in Agesilaus. The faithful services of the adjutant were rewarded by a grant of land in the neighbourhood of Olympia. Very characteristic of Xenophon is the act of pious ingenuity, or ingenious piety, by which he contrived at once to enlarge his new possessions and to provide for the gratification of his favourite tastes. A tenth of the booty taken by the Ten Thousand had, according to Greek custom, been appropriated to the gods; it was to be divided between Apollo and his sister Artemis. The execution of the scheme was reserved for the generals. Xenophon fulfilled his part, as far as Apollo was concerned, by placing a votive offering in the Athenian treasure-house at Delphi; but he employed the sum set aside for Artemis, not without oracular guidance, in the purchase of land adjoining his own modest estate at Scillus. Here he erected a miniature shrine to the goddess, modelled on the temple at Ephesus, and instituted a yearly tithe-offering and festival, in which the men and women of the town, and indeed of the whole

district, were to meet together and enjoy the hospitality of the goddess. The central feature of the festival, dedicated as it was to the goddess of the chase, and held on land well stocked with game, naturally enough consisted of a hunt, in which the youth of the neighbourhood took part, Xenophon's own sons at their head. Here in the shadow of the solemn forest, by the cool waters, teeming with fish and conchylia, of the river Selinus, beneath the plumes of the grove enclosing the sanctuary, the aging soldier of fortune found consolation for many a vanished dream of glory. It had not, indeed, been granted him to found a new dynasty in that city by the Black Sea, where he had hoped to lord it while he lived, and be succeeded by his sons. Still, here was a manorial seat where he might spend a noble leisure, relieved of the petty cares of life ; where he might tame his steeds, follow the chase, till the soil, and practise the writer's art. He saw his sons, now in the flower of their youth, growing up, strong and beautiful, by his side, and he was able to complete their education, which had begun in Sparta, in accordance with his ideals. Nor were his efforts wholly vain, as is shown by the universal grief at the untimely death of his firstborn on the field of Mantinea. Some of the most illustrious pens in Greece, that of Isocrates, and even that of Aristotle among them, were stirred to busy rivalry by the heroic death of that young officer of high promise. It was not only that they desired to honour Grylus ; they wished also to offer respectful sympathy and consolation to the stricken father. He, for his part, was in sore need of comfort. The same victories of Thebes which had robbed him of his son had deeply humiliated both the land of his birth and the land of his adoption, and had, moreover, destroyed all his hopes of a panhellenic union. He had been driven from hearth and home. Athens, indeed, had opened the gates so long closed to him ; but it was not in Athens, now an alien city for him, that he spent the last years of his life. He went to Corinth, and there, about the year 350, in the midst of restless literary activity, he closed his long and chequered career.

2. A mixed character is as difficult to do justice to as the shifting hues of a many-sided talent. Both are combined in Xenophon. It is not strange, therefore, that his reputation has greatly fluctuated, that the early centuries paid him excessive honour, while the modern tendency is to load him with undeserved obloquy. The truth is that his talents rose well above the line of mediocrity, but that the same cannot be said of his character, even when we judge him, as we are bound to do, according to the standards of his time. There is some temptation to say of him that his character injured his talent; that his self-complacent vanity deceived him as to the limits of his powers, and induced him to engage in so great a diversity of tasks as seriously to impair the value of his work. But this formula, like all others which destroy the unity of a personality, appears on closer examination to be an inaccurate expression of the facts. If we look deeper we shall find this unedifying versatility foreshadowed in his intellectual endowment as well as in his moral qualities, namely, in the excessive suppleness of his mind and tastes, in that lack of a solid centre of resistance which is as characteristic of the thinking and expressing as of the willing and acting personality.

To such an extent does he possess this attribute of adaptability that we find him maintaining contradictory theses in different works with equal emphasis. At one time he champions the primacy of knowledge and its unconditional sovereignty over the will; at another he is for the omnipotence of training and habit, and their educational allies, reward and punishment. In one passage, treating of the two sexes, he lays emphasis on the natural differences of their endowment, and the consequent justification in nature of the separation of their tasks; elsewhere he insists that, given the necessary instruction, women would attain the same degree of courage as is usual among men. Nor does it make much difference to Xenophon whether he preaches these contradictory doctrines in his own name, or whether he puts them in the mouth of his revered master Socrates. This intellectual flexibility is coupled with the

wish to rival the most admired authors, each in his own special branch of literature. Has Thucydides eclipsed all the historians who preceded him, but left his great work unfinished? Xenophon is at once ready to step into the breach and write a continuation, in which he even imitates the peculiar colouring of the Thucydidean style. Has Plato produced, in the "Symposium," a marvel of poetic delineation and philosophic insight? Xenophon immediately makes use of the same framework to exhibit a new picture of Socrates and his friends, one which, though not competing in magnificence with the portrait painted by Plato, is intended to surpass it in naturalness and truth to life.

A borrowed costume is admirably adapted to set off the defects of a figure which it does not fit. Flowing folds of drapery become unsightly and ridiculous when they cover puny limbs. Thus a comparison of copy with original may be trusted to teach us something about the peculiarities of Xenophon. The speculative inadequacy, not to say poverty, of his intellect is nowhere more clearly manifested than in his "Symposium." Nothing can be more striking than the clumsiness with which philosophical discussions are here tacked on to the introductory matter, or the short-winded haste with which the thread is dropped when it has barely been taken up. It is as if one were to wedge in the question of the possibility of teaching virtue between such phrases as "How do you do?" and "How hot it is here!" in a drawing-room conversation. That which makes the "Symposium" worth reading is exclusively the by-play of the dialogue, the pithy humour of Socrates' jests on his own ugliness, and the boldly realistic description of the pantomimic display and the acrobatic feats with which the company were regaled by the pupils of the Syracusan ballet-trainer. Here Xenophon is in his element, just as a similar description in the "Anabasis" shows him at his literary best. And there are several passages of like character in the "Hellenica" which prove how well his talent was suited to the *genre* style. One of these describes the meeting between Agesilaus, seated on the grass and

plainly clad, and the satrap Pharnabazus blazing with gold and accompanied by men carrying costly carpets. Then there is the extraordinarily long and elaborate account of King Otys' wooing through the intermediary of Agesilaus. Lastly there is the story of how the Spartan Sphodrias escaped the death-penalty by the intercession, proffered with much shame and hesitation, of Prince Archidamus, who loved the condemned man's son. More than one fresh and vivid simile, learnt in nature's school, testifies to our author's talent for exposition, and there are several passages of deep and moving pathos. We may mention the murder of Alexander the tyrant of Pheræ, and the picture of his wife, her soul divided between hatred and anxiety, waiting the issue of the crime of which she has compelled her brothers to be the instruments. Above all, we have the battle at Phlius, and the fine description, with which the narrative ends, of the women ministering to the wearied victors and at the same time weeping for joy. But Xenophon fell immeasurably short of his predecessors, of Herodotus as well as Thucydides, in the very point in which, pluming himself as he did on his philosophy, he thought to surpass them—in reflexion. It is true that there are several excellent speeches in the "Hellenica," admirably suited to their respective occasions, such as that of Theramenes, that of Critias, and that of Procles the Phliasian. But it is probable, in view of the particular circumstances of that conflict among the Athenian oligarchs, and in view of the known close relations between Procles and his friend, King Agesilaus, that Xenophon here had abundant sources of information to draw upon, and did not need to trust to his own constructive powers. When, however, he comes to express his own thoughts on politics—and it is almost exclusively in the later books of the history that he does so—we are reminded of the depth and far-sightedness of Thucydides solely by the operation of the law of contrast. These self-complacent sententious utterances are in part mere military technicalities, in part the threadbare commonplaces of morality. When he attempts to deduce historical occurrences from their deeper causes, it is generally the

pious element in his mind that governs the direction of his search. We have already had an opportunity of noting the skill with which he contrived to reconcile a perfectly genuine religiousness with the pursuit of his worldly interests. As an historian he often employed similar means to help himself out of a difficulty. The long and energetic rule of his patron Agesilaus ended with the profound humiliation of Sparta. But Xenophon's theological principles saved him from the necessity of investigating the relations of cause and effect, and of searching for the possible mistakes by which Agesilaus might have contributed to the ruin of his country. He regarded the disaster at Leuctra, and the whole chain of events which led up to it, as the work of an angry deity taking vengeance for the illegal occupation of the Theban Acropolis by a Spartan general.

3. The "Hellenica" has been the object of much unjust as well as just censure. The author enjoyed the protection and the society of a ruler who, as we learn from Plutarch, was distinguished by particularly winning manners, and was accustomed to treat his dependents with excessive favour and indulgence. In writing the history of his own time, Xenophon was for the most part engaged in writing the history of Agesilaus. And if we acknowledge that he was unable to free himself from the spell of his illustrious patron's thoughts and sentiments, we are acknowledging no more than that Xenophon was not a great man. Circumstances conspired against his independence of judgment with a force to which many a sturdier spirit might well have succumbed. It is also easy to understand how Xenophon came to hold that over-rated monarch in still higher esteem than did his contemporaries and immediate successors. Judicial exactness in the apportioning of praise and blame is not to be looked for as from favourite to patron, and in the present case there is no serious ground for assuming any wilful distortion of historical truth. His silence on certain important events of that day, such as the founding of Megalopolis, or the institution of the second Athenian maritime confederacy,

testifies to the limitations of his horizon ; but here again we have no occasion to scent partisanship. His attitude towards the civil broils of Athens is precisely that of a moderate aristocrat, and he was in the fullest sympathy with Theramenes, whom Aristotle, as we have recently learnt, valued above all the other politicians of that age. We need not approve of his turning his back on his country immediately on the outbreak of a fierce faction-fight, one which ended in the defeat of his own party. But we ought not to be harder on him than the whole of antiquity was. His own city forgave him, though late, and we shall do well not to be more Athenian than the Athenians. Another charge which has been brought against Xenophon is that of injustice towards his great Theban contemporaries. To our thinking, the charge has no foundation. Indeed, we are disposed to forgive the son of Grylus many sins for the sake of his hearty hatred of the Theban policy. Thebes was a cancer in the body of Hellas. Its temporary ascendency was in a high degree responsible for the subjugation of Greece. We must not lay too much stress on the Persian proclivities which were traditional at Thebes, and for which even the great Pelopidas claimed credit at the court of the "Great King." For second-rate states which aim at the leading position in a nationality must always, from the nature of the case, work in the interests of foreign dominion, whatever the views and inclinations of their chief statesmen may be. Xenophon's lack of sympathy for the Beusts and Dalwigks of Greece only testifies to the strength of those pan-Hellenic sentiments which he was bound to cherish if he was not to despise himself. And the warm commendation which he nevertheless bestows on the generalship displayed by Epaminondas at Mantinea, in the very battle where his own son was cut off in the promise of his youth, exhibits his character in a more pleasing light than almost any other fact we know about him.

Xenophon did more than make a little history, and write much of it; he also invented history. For us, at any rate, he is the oldest representative of that branch of

literature which we call the historical novel. His own production, it is true, belongs to an inferior variety of the species, for it is very far from being a picture of an age or a people. The "Cyropædia" reminds us less of the creations of Walter Scott and Manzoni than of those popular tales which give a glorified picture of a great ruler set in a framework of fiction. But while the moderns generally restrain their inventive faculty to the field of minor incident, Xenophon did not hesitate to remodel, and as he doubtless thought, to improve the central facts of history. We need not stop to study the exact details of this procedure, nor to consider whether it was justifiable. Our concern is to know the author's mind, and the more pliable the raw material of history proved in his hands, the better for us. We find, in fact, that he recast his materials in the exact likeness of his own ideals, and the latter are consequently presented to us in this work with exceptional clearness of outline. Unstable spirit as he was, he yet did not altogether lack a certain stock of fundamental principles in morals and politics. In order to understand them, it is advisable to keep in mind their common source, which was a strong antipathy to the democratic institutions of Athens. He was thus to a certain extent in agreement with his greater contemporary Plato. But the agreement did not go very far. To the real and supposed disadvantages of popular rule Plato opposed a social and political ideal of the highest originality. Xenophon, on the other hand, sought and found salvation in actually existing forms of government. They might be of Greek or of barbarian origin, they might be monarchical or aristocratic ; the great thing was that they must be removed as far as possible from any resemblance to the Athenian democracy. Among his heroes are Cyrus, who founded a monarchy of the patriarchal type in Persia, and Lycurgus, the author of the Lacedæmonian constitution, in which a limited monarchy was combined with aristocratic institutions. Over-subtle critics have supposed it necessary to distinguish between two stages in the mental development of Xenophon—an earlier, in which he favoured absolute

monarchy, and a later, in which he gave the preference to aristocratic forms of government. Such refinements are put out of court by the fact, which is generally known and admitted, that in the idealized picture of Persia contained in the "Cyropædia," the author has not scrupled to embody many a feature which in reality belonged to Sparta. Xenophon has himself remarked that the ideally perfect ruler of the patriarchal type is even in the most favourable conditions only met with occasionally as an isolated historical phenomenon. In writing the "Cyropædia" he cannot have meant to make so rare, not to say so unheard-of, a gift of fortune the basis of a permanent institution intended for constant use, and to recommend it seriously for adoption by the Greeks, to whose small city-states it was applicable only in exceptional instances. He was disgusted with the dilettantism, the inconstancy, the lack of strict adherence to principle, which he, and many others of like mind, took to be the chief characteristic of contemporary Athens and its administration. By way of remedy he laid stress on the absolute necessity of introducing a more rigid discipline, and of constructing an official hierarchy with a strict system of grades, after the military pattern. Responsibility was to be increased by concentration, and the division of labour was to be carried into the minutest detail. This last requirement leaves us in some doubt. We cannot tell how far it was due to Xenophon's knowledge of the East and its primæval civilization, which in this particular was superior to that of Greece, and how far to the influence of Plato's theory, which latter, as we must not forget, owed something to Egyptian inspiration. At any rate, this requirement is formulated with a precision which is as far removed from the ordinary Greek view as it is closely related to the conclusions developed in Plato's "Republic."

Such thoughts as these constitute the central kernel of the "Cyropædia." For shell, we have a fantastically embellished account of the triumphant career of the Persian conqueror. We need hardly say that the latter is invested with attributes intended to mark him out as an eminent

realization of the ideal ruler. But the execution of this portrait is not especially characteristic of Xenophon. His taste, and perhaps still more that of the select Spartan circle in which he moved, finds freer expression in the abundant accessory matter which forms the seasoning to an otherwise somewhat tedious book. There is a good deal of humour, of a blunt guard-room type, and an intense, but restrained, erotic element. And Xenophon would not be Xenophon if he did not assign a prominent place to sport, particularly that art of horsemanship which he praised with so much eloquence.

Three political writings of Xenophon still remain to be considered. These are: his panegyric on "the Lacedæmonian Constitution," in which, however, he dwells more on the social than the strictly political institutions of Sparta; the dialogue, "Hiero;" the work, "On the Revenue of Athens." The second of these, a dialogue between the Sicilian prince Hiero and the wise poet Simonides, seems at first sight not a little perplexing. The first portion of the work is an elaboration, in the true Platonic spirit, of the thesis that the tyrant, or ruler by force, leads a far from enviable life, and can never enjoy real happiness. The second portion, however, contains the picture of an ideal tyranny—a rule founded on violence or usurpation, and explains the conditions under which such a rule can serve the public welfare and the happiness of the tyrant himself. It is not at once obvious in which of these contradictory sections the author is really in earnest. But a closer examination removes all doubt, and shows that the preponderance of interest lies with the second or concluding portion. Simonides here recommends a policy such as we describe by the words "Cæsarism" or "imperialism." The energetic maintenance of peace and order at home, an imposing display of armed power sufficient to command respect abroad, radical measures of philanthropic tendency emanating from the royal initiative,—such are the methods by which the disorderly element is to be kept in check, and the citizens compensated for the loss of self-government. We need not stop to consider the points of agreement

or difference between this political ideal and that of the "Cyropædia." The old hypothesis is probably not far from the truth, according to which the dialogue was intended to recommend its author to Dionysius, a prince whose good graces were much sought after by other Greek writers besides Xenophon.

The third of the above-named works also shows every sign of having been written for a special occasion. It was composed when Xenophon was a very old man. He had been received back again by his native city from which he had once been banished, and he desired to show his gratitude, perhaps also to secure a better welcome for himself and still more for his sons. For this purpose he presented his country with a plan of reform, intended as a remedy for its shattered finances. He suggested that the silver-mines at Laurium should be exploited on a greatly extended scale, and that the State, instead of farming them out as before, should work them itself, at least in large measure. Nor was this to be the only instance of nationalization. Why, he asked, should not the State possess a mercantile navy as well as ships of war? Why should inns and lodging-houses be all in private hands? Everything was to be done to give a powerful impulse to trade and industry, and every citizen without exception was to receive a share of these public undertakings, in the shape of a fixed, though perhaps moderate, annuity, paid him by the State. We naturally ask by what means these far-reaching plans were to be realized. But the answer is one we find some difficulty in taking seriously. Our bold financier expects abundant assistance from capitalists, and that not only from Athenians, who might regard the annuity which they, like all other citizens, would receive, as at any rate partial interest on their outlay. He also counts on large advances from foreign States and princes, even from Persian satraps, who are to be won over by "honourable mentions" —by orders and decorations, as we should say. It will amuse our currency financiers to learn from Xenophon that gold can, and that silver can never, suffer depreciation from over-production. It was not Xenophon who invented the panacea

of nationalization. We have already met with it in connection with Hippodamus of Miletus (see Vol. I. p. 409, *seq.*). That this leaning was in accord with the tendencies of the age we learn from the instance of Plato, who did not shrink from the nationalization of the family. But along with all that is chimerical in Xenophon's schemes, we find many details which testify to his ripe and extensive knowledge of the world and of business. In one passage we find the idea of mutual insurance expressed with surprising clearness; in another there are excellent arguments against that attitude which is common among radicals of all ages, and which is expressed in the cry, "Either everything now and at once, or else nothing at all." Although in this project of his Xenophon has several points of contact with the contemporary demagogues, who insisted on the maintenance of the less-propertied classes at the public cost, the means which he advocated for the attainment of that end often betray his old way of thinking. When he recommends a policy of energetic philanthropy, vigorous interference on the part of the State, and in particular a system of rewards and prizes by which an influence is to be exerted on the most diverse departments of life, he is giving utterance to thoughts which occur in the "Cavalry Officer," the "Cyropædia," and the "Hiero," as well as in the work we are now considering.

There is yet another point in which Xenophon remained true to himself to the end—in his attitude towards things divine. Perhaps we ought here to speak of superstition rather than religion. At any rate, Xenophon showed himself primitive and superstitious in his beliefs, in more than one sense of the words. We must not make too much of the fact that he always and everywhere assumes and expects the direct intervention of the gods. This goes no further than to show that he was entirely uninfluenced by the enlightenment of the age, as represented, say, by Anaxagoras. He was well aware that his own way of thinking was not that of his times, and he excuses his exceptional position in characteristic fashion. He is anticipating objections against his continual introduction of references to the

gods in his exposition of military technicalities. "A man who has often been in danger"—it is in such terms as these that he justifies himself—"will be less inclined to be surprised at my procedure in this matter." It is as if Xenophon, with his astonishing *naivété*, were bent on corroborating by precept as well as example the old observation that gamblers, huntsmen, soldiers, miners, and sailors are more prone to superstition than other classes. His attitude towards the divine powers is completely described by the phrase: *Do ut des*. It is always his zealous endeavour to conciliate their good will by offerings; and he frequently and emphatically repeats his conviction that the gods are more inclined to aid with their wholesome counsel, imparted by means of Xenophon's beloved art of divination, those who remember them in prosperity than those who only turn to them in the stress of misfortune.

4. We have now fulfilled our design (cf. p. 64) of giving the reader a tolerable acquaintance with Xenophon's life and writings. We have not done so for his own sake, for he can hardly claim a niche to himself in the series of Greek thinkers, but in view of the importance attaching to his accounts of the words and the teaching of Socrates. The question as to what is trustworthy and what untrustworthy in these accounts is one which we have already answered in great part by implication. The positive results of our inquiry into the subject have been incorporated in our sections on the life and work of Socrates. But now that the reader has been familiarized with Xenophon's character, it may not be superfluous to lay before him a few samples of the matter which Xenophon offers as Socrates', but which we are entirely unable to receive as such.

The "Memorabilia" contains so much that is un-Socratic, and so much that is unworthy of Socrates, that some modern scholars, desiring to reconcile their respect for the portrayer with their respect for the portrayed, have gone so far as to pronounce considerable portions of the work spurious additions of later hands. In the case of one critic in particular, this violent procedure has led to the excision of the greater part of the "Memorabilia." Such

extravagances of criticism, accompanied as they are by an equally arbitrary rejection of other well-attested writings of Xenophon, are not altogether without a value of their own. They supply an undesigned corroboration of the view that the traditional estimate of Xenophon is in contradiction with the impression inevitably produced by an impartial study of his works.

On reading these reports of Socratic teaching we are at once struck by a circumstance which leads us strongly to suspect their fidelity. The dialectic method, of which Socrates was the acknowledged master, has here been thrust completely into the background. In its place we have a series of long-winded and unctuous discourses, full of positive dogmatism, and devoid of any trace of cross-examination, or of any penetrative elucidation of concepts. If this was the best that the great Athenian had to offer to the youths in the gymnasium and the men in the market-place, he would never have been able to captivate and permanently influence the best brains of his age. So conventional a preacher of the hackneyed and obvious could never have roused or provoked the nimble-witted Athenians; they would have fled from him as an intolerable bore. That it is quite possible to moralize with spirit Xenophon has shown to his own cost, by incorporating in his work the celebrated apologue of Prodicus (cf. Vol. I. p. 429).

The brightness, variety, and life of this borrowed matter only brings out more clearly how flat and monotonous are the speeches which make up the bulk of the "Memorabilia." It is true enough that the commonplaces of to-day were once fresh and original. But, stretch this principle to its utmost limit, and it will still be necessary to acknowledge that the plain and simple thoughts of the teacher of Plato and the contemporary of Thucydides are here set forth with intolerable prolixity, and smothered beneath a load of illustrations, any one of which would have been all but superfluous if it had stood alone. Consider, for example, the dialogue with Lamprocles, Socrates' eldest son, and its terribly diffuse elaboration of

the thought that all ingratitude is wrong, and that the worst kind is ingratitude towards parents, to whom we owe so much, and who mean well by their children even when, as Xanthippe sometimes did, they scold them without due cause. Immediately afterwards comes a never-ending exhortation to patience, an inordinately protracted "induction," a long series of particular instances, all leading up to the conclusion : "If you wish your brother to treat you well, treat him well yourself first." The practical advice which Socrates gives to Aristarchus does indeed contain a spark of philosophy. He is exhorted to rise above the current prejudice which brands manual labour as unworthy of a free man. But there is not the faintest glimmer of philosophy in the counsel given to Eutherus to choose a calling which does not require a great expenditure of physical energy, in order that he may not be obliged to relinquish it by declining years. Finally we note the exhaustive discussion of the advantage of having a body strengthened by care and exercise, and the string of precepts regarding behaviour at table, forbidding us, for example, to eat meat or dainties without bread, to eat too much of them, or too many sorts of them. Surely it was not for the sake of imparting instruction such as this that Socrates brought down philosophy from heaven to earth. And when at last Xenophon does come to the Socratic dialectic, after keeping us waiting for many a weary page, the method yields but meagre fruit in his hands. We may well believe him when he exclaims, almost with a sigh, "But to give a complete account of all his definitions would be a most laborious undertaking." In other words, it would be too much to expect the retired officer to plunge into the subleties of dialectic. To sum up, Xenophon was a brave country squire, an excellent *condottière* and sportsman, and he wrote tales of war and adventure full of humour and graphic delineation, but poverty-stricken in point of thought. It is one of the most amusing, and yet one of the most depressing caprices of literary destiny that has handed his works down to us among the authorities on the history of philosophy.

CHAPTER VII.

THE CYNICS.

1. AMONG the companions of Socrates there was none to whom Xenophon stood in closer relations than he did to Antisthenes, whose portrait he painted with lifelike fidelity in his "Symposium." In him he saw and admired that originality which he himself so greatly lacked. For fidelity to the teaching of the master was in this case united with a considerable faculty of independent thought. Antisthenes indeed, was more than a disciple; he continued and developed what Socrates had begun. This is apparent primarily from his method, which has not a single feature to remind us of Socrates. The latter had lived and moved in the investigation of concepts, but with Antisthenes such investigations play an entirely subordinate part. The very terms in which he expresses himself in regard to definitions betray a feeling of contempt rather than of respect for that philosophical method. Nor is there anything to be wondered at in this. Essays in definition sufficed for the founding of the Socratic ethics; they were inadequate for the purpose of developing it. The old kernel could only grow in a new shell. As for the kernel itself, Antisthenes held to it with strenuous perseverance. To give shape to the Socratic ideal was the task of his life. Socrates had insisted with all the force and passion of his nature on inexorably rigid consistency of thought, on the undivided unity of the will, on the unlimited rights of criticism, on the rational deduction of all rules of life. But he had been, in the main, satisfied with the theoretical recognition

of these demands. There were, indeed, some points in which he dissociated himself from the view of life held by most of his fellow-citizens. He differed from them not only in his condemnation of Athenian political institutions, but in the cardinal matter of the value to be placed on external goods, life itself included, all of which he esteemed as insignificant when weighed against inward peace and the welfare of the soul. But he never went to the length of a complete breach with all existing codes and standards. And yet it was precisely in the direction of such a breach that the development of his teaching naturally led. Reason can never be for long a mere auxiliary and subordinate. If she is summoned to protect that which has not originated in herself, she soon seizes the reins of power, and in the end destroys everything which she has not herself produced. The ally throws off the mask and appears as mistress. Thus Socrates laid down premisses, and his disciples drew from them the inevitable conclusions. And the processes of thought employed in the rearing of the superstructure could not but be essentially different from those which had done service in laying the foundations.

Both in the form and in the substance of the Socratic teaching we detected a tendency towards utilitarianism. But the tendency was masked to some extent by the method of definitions. Socrates subjected to a searching examination the meaning of those words in which men incorporate their judgments of value ; he tested and sifted the underlying thought, and endeavoured to transform hazy, contradictory notions into sharply defined, self-consistent concepts. But this procedure of his, though leading in particular instances to innovation or paradox, really had its root and base in contemporary beliefs. He worked with ideas, not facts. He sought to introduce order and clarity into traditional and current estimates of values, and had no dealings with anything calculated to destroy or radically to modify those estimates. If ever he did attempt anything of the kind, it was by roundabout means, and, strictly speaking, without complete logical justification. For instance, he cherished the conviction that in State

affairs far too subordinate a part was assigned to special knowledge. But in spite of all his utilitarian leanings, he never formulated the doctrine that the common interest requires all business of State to be placed under the direction of the man most capable of conducting it. Instead of that, he investigates the conception of a statesman or of a king, determines its content by the aid of analogies with pilots, physicians, farmers, and so forth, and finally reaches the conclusion that kings or statesmen who lack the requisite knowledge do not come under the concept—that, in fact, they are not really kings or statesmen at all. An "ought" is thus smuggled into the determination of what "is." A disciple who desired to follow still further the path on which the master had entered, and to attack the problem of the wholesale renovation of public and private life, could not possibly remain content with the method of definition.

If we ask what other methods remained, we shall hardly find more than two. The first of these is one which we may term the method of abstract construction. It was employed by Plato among the Socratics, and in still greater measure by the school of Jeremy Bentham. It consists, first of all, in an analysis, partly psychological, partly sociological, of the nature and the needs of men. Conclusions are drawn as to relations between the individual and society, and on these foundations, sometimes with the additional support of an appeal to more or less authentic history, the fabric of a complete scheme of society is reared, including a code of rules to govern individual conduct. Those who are deterred from following this path, by their want of talent for systematic speculation, or by their lack of confidence in long-drawn-out inferences, have an alternative plan at their disposal. They will look primarily for actual patterns and examples of their ideal society, and aim at their reproduction. This method, which we may call that of concrete empiricism, often appears in a special form which the following remarks are intended to elucidate.

The evils by which a reformer believes his age to be oppressed, and for which he seeks a remedy, admit of a

twofold interpretation. They may be regarded either as the signs of incomplete development, or as the effects of degeneracy and decay. It is to the second of these interpretations that a member of a highly civilized society is more especially prone, and that for a very simple reason—the present may be easily compared with the past, but not with the future. And though the burdens of to-day may really be light compared with those of a bygone age, they seem heavier to us because it is we who bear them. The eulogist of the past has thus become a proverb. That which is foreign or remote is often seen through a transfiguring haze which veils its imperfections and multiplies its excellences. And the effects thereby produced upon susceptible minds are the same in all ages. Those who originated the myth of a golden age, or that of a paradise of human innocence, were the precursors of a long train of religious sectarians and philosophic reformers. All of them, in a manner, resemble Christopher Columbus. They sail to a new world, hoping all the while for nothing more than a new route to a part of the old. For when conventional fetters and the manifold exigencies of an intricate society oppress the soul, where else shall a man turn despairing eyes but to the far-off primæval sources of civilization, that antiquity whose idealized picture passes so readily for a type and forecast of the future? Heart and brain are here moved by a common impulse; the heart yearns regretfully for the vanished gladness of youth, and the brain, active but not self-confident, knows its own helplessness. In such a case men hear the cry, from the lips of a Rousseau or of an Antisthenes, according to the century, "Let us return to Nature."

2. Of the writings of Antisthenes, which were largely composed in the form of dialogues, we possess but scanty remnants. Nor are we adequately informed as to the events of his life. He was born at Athens, but his mother was a Thracian woman. The fact that he was only half Greek is one of some importance in the history of Cynicism. It must, at any rate, have made it easier for him to break with accepted standards, religious as well as social. A

full-blooded Hellene, even if he had shared Antisthenes' exclusive belief in a single supreme deity, would hardly have permitted himself the blasphemous exclamation, "If I could but lay hands on Aphrodite, I would shoot her"—that is, with the bow and arrows of her son. To us these words seem to possess no small biographical significance. We cannot think that so fierce an outcry would have been wrung from the lips of any whose bosom had not harboured violent passions, whose heart had not been sorely wounded and tormented. And it seems likely that his outward circumstances were not exempt from sudden changes; for that proletarian poverty of his, of which we read so much, ill agrees with the statement that he enjoyed the costly instruction of the rhetorician Gorgias. Probably some adverse stroke of fortune robbed him of a comfortable, though not aristocratic, home, and plunged him into the depths of want. It was not till he had arrived at mature manhood that he joined the circle of Socrates' disciples—a "belated learner," to quote Plato's gibe, and turned from rhetoric to philosophy. Nature had dowered him with an iron will and a susceptible disposition, more especially sensitive to painful impressions of every kind. His ready and powerful intellect preferred concrete images to logical formulæ, and he had little taste for subtle distinctions or for adventurous speculation. He possessed a powerful, creative imagination, and a gift of vivid exposition, fascinating by its homely pith and vigour. In an age when Plato wrote, the fastidious Athenian public counted him among its standard and favourite authors. And though there is something that repels us in the censorious tone of his attacks upon men of genius like Pericles and Alcibiades, it may be pleaded in mitigation that he had himself drunk the cup of bitterness. His history was probably that of a worldling who had recklessly broken with his own past, and henceforth judged himself with the same inexorable severity which he meted out to others. But it is now time to pass in review the speculative foundations of Cynicism.

Socrates had made reason the arbiter of life. But thought and reflexion are impossible without materials in

the way of facts. These are partly supplied, so far as ethical and political questions are concerned, by that analysis of human nature and consequent synthesis which we have already mentioned and illustrated by the example of Plato. But Antisthenes followed the other method, which was more congenial to him, namely, the immediate utilization of the data of experience. Discontented with the mode of life then prevalent, and sickened by the artificiality and manifold corruption of contemporary society, he looked for salvation in a return to primitive and natural conditions. He contrasted the elaborately stimulated wants, the weakness and enervation of civilized man, with the independence, the unimpaired force, the, as he supposed, superior health and longevity of the animals. Caring little, as he in general did, for the natural sciences and their auxiliary, mathematics, he went so far as to write a book "On the Nature of Animals." No vestige of this work has been preserved, but its purport may be gathered from numerous utterances of the Cynic school, and from a number of imitations produced by later admirers. There can be no doubt that its object was to derive from the animal world authoritative models and suggestions for the shaping of human life. This method, it is clear, was inadequate, taken by itself, to effect the desired purpose, even if one could follow the Cynics in their fearless acceptance of results which offend all refined sentiment and bid defiance to social usage. From the study of animals they passed to the study of primitive man. The idealization of uncivilized peoples was no novelty in Greek literature. The tendency appears as early as in the Homeric poems, where we find the nomads of the North, who lived on milk, praised as "the justest of men." But the Cynics took the savage for their teacher in all seriousness, just as Diderot and Rousseau did in a later age. They glorified the state of nature with inexhaustible eloquence and ingenuity, and they never wearied of anathematizing the pernicious influence of civilization. In Plato's reproduction of the work of Protagoras, "On the Aboriginal Condition of

Mankind," the purpose assigned to the foundation of the first cities is that of protection against wild beasts and human injustice. "On the contrary," reply the Cynics, "city-life was the beginning of all injustice; lying and fraud had their origin here, just as surely as if cities had been founded for the express purpose of encouraging them." Again, the work we have just mentioned contains allusions to the helplessness of man, contrasted with the protection which the animals derive from the possession of wings, of thick fleeces, of tough skins, of natural armour and weapons of offence. Hence was inferred the indispensability of civilization, and its chief auxiliary, fire, for the gift of which due honour was paid to the benevolent demi-god Prometheus. "On the contrary," once more the Cynics reply, "man's helplessness is the effect of his effeminacy. Frogs and various other animals have as delicate a frame as man, but they are protected by the hardening which comes of exposure, just as the human face and eye need no protection in order to defy all the inclemencies of the weather." In general, every creature is capable of living in the situation in which it is naturally placed. Otherwise the first men could not have maintained their existence, for they lacked the use of fire just as much as dwelling-places, clothing, and artificially prepared food. Over-subtlety and the busy spirit of invention have done little to bless mankind. The greater men's efforts to obviate the hardships of life, the harder and the more toilsome has life become. And herein lies the true significance of the Prometheus-myth. The Titan was not punished because Zeus hated the human race, but because that gift of fire had sown the seeds of civilization, and therewith those of luxury and all corruption. We may remark, in passing, that this same interpretation of the Promethean legend commended itself to the kindred soul of Rousseau.

In this exposition we meet with two elements of vital importance in the doctrine of the Cynics. The arbitrary will of man is contrasted with the immanent reasonableness of Nature. All things, when left as Nature created

them, serve the purpose of their being, and when man attempts to improve them he only introduces disorder and confusion. Those who regard existing conditions of state and society as the product of chance and arbitrary caprice, as a lapse from original perfection, have obviously no alternative but to refer man to Nature as the eternal source of well-being. Further, the teaching drawn from a consideration of animal and primitive human life needed to be supplemented by what we may term, with approximate accuracy, a primordial revelation. The interpretation of the Prometheus legend, to which we have just alluded, gives us a suggestive hint in this connection. It is at first not a little surprising that the men who denied the plurality of gods and contested the truth of the Hellenic religion should have occupied themselves at all with these legends, except for the purpose of casting doubt and ridicule upon them. But we find, as a matter of fact, that Antisthenes, and his disciple Diogenes after him, made a careful study of the mythological histories of gods and heroes. He wrote a long series of works—commentaries on the Greek bible, we might call them—in which he pressed the Homeric poems into the service of Cynic doctrine by means of an ingenious, but altogether unhistorical, exegesis. It may be suggested that perhaps these treatises were written in jest. But they constitute far too large a proportion of the total literary output of Antisthenes. A still stronger objection is the fact that the methods of interpretation and adaptation employed in them were permanently retained by a branch of the Cynic school, and were handed on to the Stoic school which succeeded it. The latter, having made its peace with society and the powers that be, doubtless found these methods useful for the purpose of bridging over, if not filling up, the chasm between philosophy and popular belief. But the Cynics, who maintained an attitude of uncompromising revolt against the religion of the people, had another motive. Although they denied the plurality of gods and the current interpretation of the myths relating to them, they could neither weaken the authority

of Homer nor free their own minds from the magic spell of legendary lore. Instead of denying and rejecting, they preferred to read between the lines and to explain away, till their temerities of exegesis displayed greater audacity than mere bald negation would have done. But that which turned the scale was doubtless that need of a concrete empirical datum which the Cynics, with all their revolutionary recklessness, deemed a necessary support in their war with society. The rough and somewhat plebeian intellect of Antisthenes was ill at ease in the airy regions of pure reason and abstract construction ; it required a foothold of facts, whether authentic or fictitious. We are reminded of the "cranks" of to-day, all of whom prefer to found their utopias on violent interpretations of Scripture rather than renounce the authority of the Bible itself. Thus to the revelation supposed to be contained in Nature and primitive man, there was added a second revelation, the vehicle of which was imagined to be those earliest productions of the human mind to which we give the names of legend and saga.

3. But if we are to reach the heart of Cynicism, it is not enough to trace the paths of thought habitually followed by the mind of its founder. The same road often carries many different vehicles propelled by very different forces. It will now be our task to search for these motive forces, and make ourselves acquainted with their nature.

To understand the key-note of Cynicism, the temper out of which that whole scheme of life sprang as from a germ, we need not go further afield than to the Europe of to-day. The author of "War and Peace" represents his hero, at a certain point of his career, as a prey to "that indescribable, purely Russian (!) feeling of contempt for all that is conventional, artificial, the work of man—for all that the majority of mankind regard as the highest good." We are assured by one of the most competent judges that this sentiment dominates almost the whole of contemporary Russian literature. We will give another quotation from the same great Russian author—he is speaking this time in his own name: "We look for our ideal before us,

while in reality it lies behind us. The progress of mankind is not a means but an impediment to the realization of that ideal of harmony which we carry about in our bosoms." There arises a question, the answer to which will, perhaps, throw some light on the state of mind we are considering. The occurrence and wide diffusion of such sentiments in modern Russia points to their being something different from a mere reaction against excessive civilization. If that were their true character, we should expect to find them further West.

We are inclined to conjecture that even a moderate degree of civilization may be felt as excessive when it is imposed from without, and, so to speak, grafted on an unsuitable stock. In more general terms, the situation to which we refer is one where elements, some making for civilization, others hostile to it, are found existing side by side, but not fused together, in the same individual or national character. We may here recall the semi-barbarian origin of Antisthenes, and the fact that not a few of his successors belonged to the outer fringe of Greek culture. Diogenes and Bion came from Pontus, Metrocles and his sister Hipparchia from Southern Thrace, while the satirist of the school, Menippus, was a Phœnician and born in slavery. A similar observation applies to the members of the earlier Stoic school, who professed what may be described as a not too radically modified Cynicism. At their head also stood a half-Greek, and not many of them were natives of the central seats of Hellenic civilization, Often, too, plebeian birth produced much the same effect as foreign origin, while not infrequently the two stigmas were combined. Cynicism has accordingly been named, not inappropriately, "the philosophy of the Greek proletariate." In the eighteenth century we see the cult of Nature and the revolt against civilization originating with a man who at one time was obliged to earn his bread as a servant and again by copying music, though he knew himself to be a literary genius with scarce an equal. Similarly the movement we are now considering may well have owed some of its force to the contrast between a well-

founded self-esteem and a mean situation. These external influences were no doubt seconded by those inward conflicts, of which we have seen examples in our study of Euripides. More than one soul must have been torn by such conflicts in a day when the authority of tradition was reeling under repeated blows, and when Religion, hitherto supreme ruler of men's lives, had been deposed and her throne left vacant. Nor could the gradual extinction of political liberty fail to release much energy, which now began to be directed towards the remodelling of individual and corporate life. Some of Byron's poems have been spoken of as parliamentary oratory seeking an abnormal outlet. In like manner we may speak of the Cynic movement, with its intensified craving for personal freedom and self-assertion, its defiant accentuation of individual independence, as an abnormal manifestation of political liberalism. It is as if the individual had despaired of society and now put forth all his energies to save himself from the common shipwreck. This individualism was the key-note of the age, the dominating feature of whole departments of intellectual life. It was associated with a profound sensitiveness to the misery of human existence, with that gathering stream of pessimism whose progress has long been under our observation, and the two together produced effects which went far beyond the isolated phenomenon of Cynicism. For proof it will suffice to adduce the significant fact that in nearly all the philosophies of any vogue the technical terms denoting "the supreme good" were words of negative import. Freedom from pain, freedom from grief, freedom from excitement, freedom from passion, freedom from illusion,—such were the names chosen to denote the highest goal of human endeavour. In other cases the nomenclature does not tell so plain a story. But even then, that which is represented as the highest attainable, and for the attainment of which all the powers of man must be strained to their utmost, is not positive happiness but mere freedom from suffering. This wide diffusion of a keen sensitiveness to the misery of existence is a fact which

we shall do well to bear in mind. We shall thus be enabled to understand much that would otherwise seem strange in the inner workings of Cynicism, and we shall be saved from hasty and unjust judgments.

It was, as we have seen, an age when new claims were making themselves heard. Existing usages and institutions had been called in question. It was necessary to prosecute vigorously the work of criticism, and on its results to found a new system of social, and still more of individual, practice. For these purposes the chief available instrument was the intellectualistic radicalism of Socrates, which gained in influence the longer it engaged the public attention. The resistance which meets all innovations, as such, diminishes with familiarity, and what was at first a breach with custom becomes, in time, a new custom itself.

4. We have already referred to the fidelity of Antisthenes to his master's teaching. Indeed, so far as relates to the foundations of ethics, the two may be said to have held identical doctrine. For Antisthenes, no less than for Socrates, virtue is something that can be taught, an inalienable possession, a "weapon that cannot be wrested from the hand;" for both it is essentially one with wisdom, and, at least when united with "Socratic strength," sufficient to secure the happiness of man. But when it comes to a more exact definition of what constitutes happiness, a difference becomes apparent. Self-sufficiency (*αὐτάρκεια*) of the individual is now placed conspicuously in the foreground, and strong emphasis is laid on the proposition: "The wise man will shape his life, not by precedent, but by the laws of virtue." Depreciation of external goods and the pleasures they can procure was from the first a feature of the Socratic spirit. But Antisthenes gave new definiteness and point to the original maxims. The complex concept of *εὐδαιμονία*, or well-being, received different interpretations, as was only natural, from disciples who differed in character and social position, and the expression of a particular one-sided view would call forth an equally one-sided insistence on the opposite standpoint. Thus while a man of the world like Aristippus might admit

passive enjoyment, provided it were not allowed to grow into a necessity, as part of his scheme of life, Antisthenes took the opposite line, preached in round terms the total rejection of such enjoyment, and raised this rejection to the rank of a fundamental principle. "Better madness than pleasure," is a phrase of his which reminds us of the outbreak of fierce hatred against the goddess of love, to which we have already referred. Heracles was the model whom he and the other Cynics held up for imitation, the patron saint, so to speak, of the school. Antisthenes wrote a dialogue entitled "Heracles," and, with this for guidance, his followers delighted to tell again the story of the hero's laborious and militant life, identifying, by ingenious allegories, the foul monsters which he vanquished with the vices and lusts that beset the souls of men. For a foil to this ideal of strenuous energy, they took Prometheus, the quibbler and "sophist," the misguided victim of his own pride and contentious spirit, whose liver—this was their subtle reading of the old myth—swelled when he was praised and contracted when he was blamed, and who was finally redeemed from his torments by the merciful interposition of Heracles himself.

The resistance of an inert world soon convinced the Cynic, if he had not known it from the first, that his ideals stood little chance of realization within the pale of existing institutions. He therefore did his utmost to place his own person outside the circle of social life. He renounced all the cares of property; he formed no family ties; he abode in no settled dwelling-place. Not only did he hold aloof from politics, but, in his capacity of "world-citizen," he viewed with indifference the fortunes of his own city and nation. He chose the life of a beggar. His long, shaggy hair and beard, his wallet or beggar's pouch, his staff, his cloak of coarse cloth—the only covering he wore winter or summer,—these were the outward tokens of his sect, the marks which sometimes procured him honour, but more often contempt and even blows. Even the luxurious Alexandria of Trajan's time was full of these philosophic begging-friars; and when Julian ascended the throne,

towards the close of the fourth century, the movement was by no means extinct. All the motives that govern the life of the average man, particularly the craving for wealth and power, all the ideals to which the common herd look up in respectful admiration, passed with the Cynics for "illusion." "Freedom from illusion" was their motto. The sight of the poor deluded multitude, forsaken of reason and virtue, filled them with a feeling of contempt which either vented itself in mockery and satire or awoke a spirit of missionary enterprise. Some, like Crates surnamed "the Door-opener," intruded into private houses, and imparted unsought counsel, heedless of abuse; others, like Bion and Teles, delivered sermon-like harangues, of all degrees of excellence, before public audiences. No act was too rash for the intrepid Cynic, and in the days of the Roman Empire, it was generally an adherent of this school that would address the emperor in the theatre, and voice the well- or ill-founded discontent of the masses, occasionally drawing down upon himself a heavy penalty. The wisest emperors, however, avoided gratifying the wishes of brawlers who yearned for a martyr's crown. The annals of the sect record at least one instance of voluntary, self-imposed martyrdom. Peregrinus committed suicide by burning before the assembled multitude at the Olympic festival. This act of self-immolation, which was intended as an imitation of Heracles, the patron saint of the Cynics, was laughed to scorn by Lucian, in his work, "The End of Peregrinus," with more zest than wit.

But we must leave these later manifestations of the Cynic temper, and endeavour to gain a clearer idea than we have yet succeeded in obtaining of its source and origin. An insatiable thirst for freedom, a profound sensitiveness to the ills of life, an unshakable faith in the majesty and all-sufficiency of reason, and a corresponding abysmal contempt for all traditional ideals,—such are the moods and the convictions which lie at the root of Cynicism, and which are expressed by the representatives of the school in language of which some relics still remain.

"Bowed by no yoke of desire nor laden with fetters of thraldom,
One thing alone do we honour, immortal Freedom, our Mistress."

Thus sings the poet of the school, Crates of Thebes, who also glorified the πήρα, or beggar's wallet of the Cynics, symbolic of their life, in verses parodying a passage of the "Odyssey" which relates to Crete—

"Pera, so name we an isle, girt round by the sea of Illusion,
Glorious, fertile, and fair, land unpolluted of evil;
Here no trafficking knave makes fast his ships in the harbour;
Here no tempter ensnares the unwary with venal allurements.
Onions and leeks and figs and crusts of bread are its produce.
Never in turmoil of battle do warriors strive to possess it;
Here there is respite and peace from the struggle for riches and honour."

Antisthenes made unceasing war upon accepted ideals, upon the belief in civilization, even upon the old-time glories of the nation, hitherto held sacred from attack. The dialogues which he wrote in furtherance of his campaign have perished except for a few sparse relics, and it is to the allusions and imitations of later writers, especially Dion of Prusa, who was born between 40 and 50 A.D., that we owe the possibility of forming a fairly full, but not too trustworthy, idea of their contents. We have already referred to the dialogue in which he contrasted Heracles, the primæval pattern of Cynic strength and thoroughness, with the vain quibbler Prometheus. Another work in which he gave expression to his contempt for civilization would seem to have had for its theme the unjust condemnation of Palamedes, a man whom the ancients had regarded almost as the human counterpart of Prometheus. To him were ascribed the invention of regular meals, of the alphabet, of arithmetic, of army organization, of signalling by fire, of the game of draughts; in short, of a vast number of the aids to civilization. But the myth added that the Greeks had condemned him on a false charge, and stoned him to death beneath the walls of Troy. Antisthenes asks, with bitter scorn—How was it possible that progress and refinement should have borne

such fruit? In particular, how came the Atridæ, who, as rulers and leaders of armies, could not fail to find those inventions of the greatest use, to allow their teacher to be accused and sent to a shameful death? This episode from the legendary past is put forward as another proof that the imagined blessings of civilization, its alleged refining and elevating influence, are empty illusions. In a dialogue entitled "The Statesman," Antisthenes, as we are not surprised to learn, heaped unmeasured condemnation on all the most famous statesmen of Athens. The wealth and power which they had won for their country, and for which they were chiefly honoured, were in his eyes not a valuable but a fatal gift, like that golden fleece which kindled the fratricidal strife of Atreus and Thyestes, with all its heritage of horrors and crimes.

Similar contempt for the greatest Athenian statesman, and a similar assertion that these men had made their country stronger and richer but not better, are to be met with in Plato's "Gorgias." The coincidence would seem to justify the inference that on this matter Socrates thought much as his disciples did. Much more astonishing is the audacity with which Antisthenes—if he really was Dion's model—assailed the glorious memory of the great war for freedom. He would appear to have argued somewhat as follows: The victories of that war would have been truly great only if the Persians had stood high in point of wisdom and valour. On that hypothesis, their defeat would have meant that the Greeks, and in particular the Athenians, possessed these qualities in still higher measure. But that hypothesis had not been realized. In order to support this contention, Antisthenes gave an exhaustive account (probably in his "Cyrus") of the Persian mode of education, and severely condemned it. He urged, further, that in Xerxes the Persians had not possessed a king or commander in the true sense of the words, but only a man who could wear a lofty bejewelled head-dress and sit on a golden throne. A multitude which quaked before a man like that, and which had to be driven to battle by the lash, was not an army whose defeat argued any signal

merit on the part of the victors. Again, if those famous battles had been won by virtue of moral superiority, how was it that the Athenians suffered defeat in their turn during the course of the war, and finally, in the time of Conon, gained a second naval victory over the Persians? Such shiftings of fortune only proved that neither side possessed thorough training and discipline, just as in a contest between two unskillful wrestlers, each will throw the other in turn.

5. One would have thought that even the most radical of radicals would have been satisfied with an audacity of criticism which did not spare the most sacred memories of the nation—a criticism which to Athenian patriots may well have seemed a retrospective justification of the sentence passed on Socrates. And yet we learn that in point of fearlessness Antisthenes was far outstripped by his pupil Diogenes. The latter compared his teacher to a trumpet which gives forth a mighty sound, but has no ears to hear it. That is to say, he did not think Antisthenes sufficiently in earnest with his doctrine. And, in truth, Diogenes was the first to realize the Cynic ideal in its entirety. He may be called the father of practical Cynicism. The strength of intellect and of will that he manifested in the pursuit of his aims made him one of the most popular figures of antiquity. Some of his contemporaries, indeed, regarded him as a caricature of his spiritual grandsire, and dubbed him "Socrates gone mad," but his repute grew with the centuries. The high esteem in which he came to be held may be inferred from the writings of Plutarch and Lucian, in which his name has almost superseded that of Antisthenes. Further testimony is contained in the speeches of Dion, and still more in the letters of the Emperor Julian. Upon the latter the personality of Diogenes made an impression, the strength of which may be judged from the bold freaks of exegesis to which he was driven in order to reconcile his respect for the man with his distaste for certain cardinal doctrines of the sect. And yet between the philosopher who lived in a tub and the philosopher who sat on the

throne of the empire, there was an interval of half a thousand years.

This prodigious popularity of Diogenes has not illumined but rather obscured, the facts of his life ; for he early became the central figure of a luxuriant growth of anecdote and legend. His father was named Hicesias, and carried on the business of a banker or money-changer at Sinope, on the coast of the Black Sea. Diogenes was banished from his native city, and migrated to Athens, where he was won for philosophy by Antisthenes. He lived to extreme old age, spending his time alternately at Athens and at Corinth. His death, which took place in the latter city in the year 323, is said to have been on the same day as that of Alexander the Great. There is a story, probably a fiction, to the effect that in his youth he had been guilty of coining false money, and that this was the reason of his banishment. This story seems to have arisen from a misunderstanding of a passage in his dialogue, "The Panther." He there stated that he had received from the Delphic oracle a command to "recoin the money." But the Greek word *νόμισμα*, which is here used, has a double significance—it may denote either current coin or current usages and recognized rules of conduct. It must have been in the second of these senses that the word was used in the oracular response, with reference to a readjustment of ethical values.

Another story, which is also open to doubt, though it was repeated by many authors and formed the subject of two ancient monographs, relates how he was captured by pirates and sold as a slave to Xeniades the Corinthian. According to Dion, who is usually well informed on Diogenes, it was of his own free choice that he left Athens to live in Corinth after the death of Antisthenes. But even if we grant that Diogenes really did act as tutor to the sons of Xeniades and educate them on his famous and original plan, everything points to the conclusion that he was soon perfectly at liberty to live and teach at Corinth exactly as he had done at Athens. For in spite of all uncertainties in matters of biographical detail, we have

fairly trustworthy information on his habits and mode of life. He put aside all care or thoughts for property and the means of subsistence; by a process of ascetic training he reduced his wants to the absolute minimum. And yet his face was radiant with health, strength, and cheerfulness. For every one who addressed him he had an apt and ready answer, roughly sarcastic or gracefully courteous, as the case might be. He was as friendly with the lowest as he was proud with the greatest of men; and, in spite of the gross violations of decency by which he sought to show his entire independence of convention and opinion, the astonishment which he aroused was coupled with universal respect and all but universal admiration. It is still possible to point out the spot which was his favourite haunt while he lived in the luxurious pleasure-loving city of Corinth. It was the cypress grove on the high ground of Craneion, a residential quarter of the city. In this fair pleasaunce, not far from a temple of Aphrodite, and the mausoleum of Laïs, the ironical despiser of pleasure loved to sun himself and breathe an air famous for its aromatic freshness. Here he might be seen, seated on the grass in the midst of a circle of reverent disciples, whom he held spell-bound by his talk; and here tradition places the scene of his interview with the great Alexander. Of the manner of his death varying accounts are given. According to some, like many other adherents of the Cynic and Stoic sects, he took his own life. He was buried not far from Craneion, by the side of the road leading to the Isthmus, and a dog, carved in Parian marble, was placed over his grave. He had adopted as a title of honour the opprobrious epithet of "dog" (Greek *κύων*, hence "Cynic"), which had been applied to him, and perhaps to his teacher before him. Similarly, political parties have sometimes appropriated the nicknames given them by opponents; thus the Gueux (beggars) of the Netherlands, and the Tories (highwaymen). "Heavenly Dog" is the name given to Diogenes, doubtless with allusion to the Dog-star, by the poet Cercidas in verses dedicated to his honour.

Diogenes influenced posterity more by his example

than by his writings. Among his pupils was Crates, a well-born Theban, who divided his not inconsiderable property among his fellow-citizens, and adopted the life of a beggar. In this he was followed by two converts from Maroneia in Thrace, Metrocles and his famous sister Hipparchia, who became the life-companion of the misshapen beggar-philosopher. His poems, some specimens of which we have already quoted, consisted partly of parodies, in which even the wise Solon was not spared, and partly of tragedies. A few relics of the latter have been preserved, a few lines in praise of the world-citizenship and the freedom from care of those who possess nothing. Of the other pupils of Diogenes the two who most deserve special mention are the Syracusan slave Monimus, the aggressive enemy of universal "illusion," and Onesicritus, who accompanied Alexander in his campaigns, and was not a little struck by the resemblance between the life of Indian penitents and that of the Cynics. The statesman Phocion and the rhetorician Anaximenes are also mentioned as his pupils in a wider sense of the word.

Of the seven book-dramas of Diogenes, all of which dealt with mythological subjects, we only possess three or four lines of slashing invective against "filthy and unmanly luxury." His prose works are lost without a trace. It is quite impossible to distinguish in detail between what is genuine and what is spurious in the sayings attributed to him. To avoid repetition, the little we know of his personal teaching will be incorporated in the general exposition and criticism of Cynic doctrines to which we now proceed.

6. The extant remains of the hortatory speeches of Teles, the date of which is about 240 B.C., contain a sediment of general Cynic teaching, the common property, we venture to say, of the school. The chief feature here brought before our eyes is that reversal of ordinary judgments of worth, in respect both of virtue and of happiness, which is denoted by the technical term of *ἀδιαφορία*, or indifference. It may at first seem as if an attitude of indifference were inconsistent with any judgments of worth at all, new or old. But the contradiction is only apparent.

The doctrine of ἀδιαφορία is not to be understood as implying that the externals of life were to the Cynics matter of entire and absolute indifference. If so, it would have been impossible for them to project a new ideal of social and political order. The true meaning of the doctrine is as follows: The man who has gained perfect freedom for his own soul, who has vanquished "illusion," is superior to all external circumstances. Sickness, banishment, death, deprivation of funeral rites, all that men in general regard as the direst calamities, cannot disturb his peace of mind. On the other hand, all the so-called good things of life —power, riches, honour—are incapable of affording him pleasure. But for the man who has not yet attained this goal of inward emancipation, who is still struggling to overcome illusion and to cast off the yoke of passion, outward circumstances are not indifferent. It is in this connexion that the readjustment of values, the reversal of common judgments of worth, takes place. The beggar wins freedom more easily than the king; the needy and the despised have an advantage over the possessors of wealth and honour. Indifference is thus not for him who is still climbing, but for him who stands on the summit; he has conquered all illusion, and the way now lies open for him, not to happiness merely, in the ordinary sense, but to such bliss as the gods enjoy.

Once we have familiarized ourselves with this mode of thought, we shall be able to understand how Diogenes was led to the extreme paradoxes of which his dramas were full. His constant aim was to exhibit the pernicious effects of conventional ideas, their power of destroying inward peace. He was never tired of depicting the misery which arises out of a false estimate put on things in themselves indifferent, not merely for those primarily concerned, but for distant generations as well, through the emotional shock produced by the narration and dramatic reproduction of the original events. "There they sit together in the theatre," we may imagine Diogenes exclaiming; "they are dissolved in tears and racked by unspeakable horror, all because of a 'Thyestean banquet' or the marriage of

Œdipus with his own mother." And yet this horror rested upon pure imagination. The example of fowls, or dogs, or asses, and the brother-and-sister marriages of the Persians teach us, so he thought, that the union of near kin is not necessarily against nature. Similarly, he justified cannibalism by an appeal to the customs of many peoples, and by an argument drawn from the Anaxagorean physics. Since all contained parts of all, human flesh was not a unique or privileged substance. Diogenes was not here concerned so much with the establishment of rules for conduct, as with the enforcement of the doctrine that the wise man is "self-sufficient," and absolutely independent of the power of fate. Even when destiny brings upon him calamities as horrible as those which overtook Thyestes or Œdipus, he can convince himself, by a flawless chain of reasoning, that no real evil has befallen him. It must, however, be conceded that in framing these paradoxes Diogenes was influenced to a certain extent by mere delight in the bizarre as such, and the wish to astonish the honest bourgeois by a dazzling exhibition of dauntless courage. We need not go far to find modern parallels.

The little that we know of the Cynic ideals of the state and society creates a very different impression. Here every feature stands in close relation with historical reality, with the actual circumstances of the day, or of the recent past, or the near future; and for this reason the seriousness of those projects is not to be doubted. There is much significance in the mere fact that the "Republic" of Diogenes, a work whose genuineness has been questioned, but which is amply guaranteed by the testimony of the earliest Stoics, contained the picture of an ideal political and social order. It proves that the vagrancy and the mendicancy of the Cynic, as also his withdrawal from public affairs, were regarded by the founders of the school as temporary makeshifts, and not intended as permanent and normal elements in the perfect life. The leading features of their ideal were the removal of all barriers that divide man from man, that is to say, the abolition of national and social distinctions and of the privileges based

on sex. The form of government which they proposed was doubtless an enlightened and provident despotism. It is difficult, at all events, to see how their boundless contempt for the deluded multitude could have been reconciled with any scheme giving that multitude an effective share in government, while a dominant aristocracy would have been made impossible by the provisions of their social programme. There is great truth in the observation, first made by Plutarch, that Alexander realized the Cynic ideal on its political side by the foundation of his world-empire. It is noticeable, too, that in Egyptian state-papers of the Ptolemaic era passages occur which agree both in sentiment and expression with the teachings of the Cynic school. Lastly, that division of mankind into Hellenes and barbarians, to which even Aristotle clung, was vehemently rejected by the great Alexandrian scholar Eratosthenes, whose teacher, Ariston, was remarkable among the Stoics for his leanings towards Cynicism. A movement which implied the disparagement of the old city-states, which sapped the national sentiment of Greece, and which cherished ideals incompatible with a graded social organization, thus provided a fitting prelude and accompaniment to the monarchical transformation and the partial Orientalizing of Hellas. The Cynic and Stoic dream of a single flock under a single shepherd was temporarily realized, and even after the decay of two empires survived for centuries as an ideal.

Our information on the social scheme of Diogenes is scanty and confined to a few provisions regarding property and population. We read of a proposal to introduce a kind of paper-money, the so-called "bone-money," which was to replace the precious metals as a medium of exchange, and prevent the accumulation of movable wealth. Quite unconsciously, for his method was anything but historical, the Cynic has here imitated the iron currency of the Spartans. We are not told how he proposed to deal with landed property, but there can be little doubt that he would either have entirely prohibited the private ownership of land, or else confined it within the narrowest

possible bounds. It is clear that there was no room for a law of inheritance under a system subversive of the family. That "community of children" was a fundamental feature of the scheme, is stated in so many words; and we need not hesitate to accept an assertion which is probable in itself and is nowhere contradicted. Diogenes is here in agreement with the early Stoics, as well as with Plato, whose similar scheme, however, was only intended to be applied to the ruling class. It is said that Diogenes further proposed the community of wives; but, from the context in which we find both this statement and a similar one regarding the founders of the Stoic school, it is plain that what he really advocated was something which we should now term "free love," but which may be described with greater fidelity to the Cynic ideal as a system of loveless unions subject to no control on the part of the State. In this instance zeal for unlimited individual freedom, from the yoke of passion as well as from the yoke of society, gained the victory over every other consideration. But, here as elsewhere, nature sometimes proved stronger than theory. The only *liaison* which is reported with any detail as having occurred among members of this group is that between Crates and Hipparchia, a woman who did not disdain the Cynic dress and the Cynic life; and this, at all events, was evidently no casual and temporary association, but an instance of genuine love.

7. It is not easy to discern the connexion between the social morality of the Cynics and their fundamental ethical postulates. If we possessed the "Republic" of Diogenes, or any remnant whatever of the relevant works of Antisthenes ("On the Beautiful and the Just," "On Justice and Courage," "On Injustice and Impiety"), our task would be easier. We might then hope to discover the method by which social obligations were deduced from the conception of individual happiness as based on self-sufficiency and the conquest of desire. But as it is, we are left to conjecture. All we can say is that there is no lack of connecting-links between that ideal of happiness on the one hand and the rudiments of social virtue on the other. The stern

subjection in which the Cynic was expected to keep his passions, primarily to be sure in the interests of his own inward peace, could not but turn to the advantage of those who would have suffered if those passions had been let loose. This thought finds expression in the concluding lines of the passage we have already cited from the burlesque poem of Crates; and the condemnation of jealousy and exclusive family affection which we find in Plato and the Stoics illustrates the same tendency. If, then, no one is allowed to own more than is required for the satisfaction of his most elementary needs, if all possession beyond this is to be regarded as hurtful to the possessor, there is an end of every occasion and every motive for plundering, enslaving, or oppressing others. Lastly, the unconditional rejection of all prejudices founded on distinctions of origin or of status choked at the fount the well-spring of pride and presumption; though it must be allowed that new temptation to these sentiments was provided by the Cynic's lofty consciousness of superior virtue and his fine intellectual disdain for the deluded multitude. In reality, however, the Cynic was influenced by altruistic motives in a far higher degree than his ethics required him to be. Diogenes was universally praised for his kindness and his gentleness, and his successors were conspicuous by their efforts to help and reform their fellow-men. Nor is this all; a clear note of sympathy with the suffering and the oppressed runs through all the literary relics of the school. A less pleasant feature was an inveterate suspicion of the rich and the high-placed, which was ready to impute sordid motives on the least occasion. Both characteristics may perhaps be justly laid to the account of the half proletarian origin and the wholly proletarian mode of life which were common in this sect.

The ethical system of the Cynics derived neither increase of content nor reinforcement of motive from religion. Here, if anywhere, it is necessary to keep theology and religion strictly apart. The Cynics had the first, but lacked the second. With their clearness of intellect and their confidence in intellect, with their tendency to demand a radical solution of every problem, with their peculiar and exacting

ideal of virtue, they could not fail to recognize the contradictions, the absurdities, the unworthinesses of current polytheism; nor could they rest satisfied with any of the compromises which for so long had served to bridge the gulf between the old faith and the new. The Cynics thus became the first to preach, without reserve or qualification, that simplest form of theology—monotheism—a doctrine which commended itself to them as much by its accordance with the universal reign of law as by its freedom from mythical accretions at variance with their own views on morality. It is only by convention that there are many gods; by nature there is but one. The Godhead resembles no other being; there is no likeness of Him whereby He may be known. These two propositions, which occurred in the writings of Antisthenes, comprise the sum of Cynic theology so far as known to us.

In any case, the Deity was to them a colourless abstraction, not unlike the "First Cause" of the English Deists. They saw in the "Supreme Being" no Father caring for his children, no Judge punishing sin; at the most a wise and purposeful Governor of the world. That the Cynic felt himself bound by any but the weakest of personal relations to the Godhead, there is not a trace of evidence to show. The best confirmation of this statement is the fruitlessness of the most zealous endeavours to make a case for the other side. Jakob Bernays, who saw in the adherents of "the most purely deistic sect of antiquity" the precursors and unwitting auxiliaries of the movement in favour of Biblical religious forms, would only too gladly have credited them with some touch of the spirit which animated their successors. But when he speaks of their "consciousness of union with God," and the "feeling of power springing therefrom," he has no better proof to offer than an arbitrary misinterpretation of a manifest joke, one of the many which are, rightly or wrongly, ascribed to Diogenes. The latter, as a piece of dialectic sword-play, undertook to prove that the wise man need envy no one, for he possesses all things. "Everything is the property of the gods" (note that the Cynic adopts the popular polytheistic standpoint); "the

wise are the friends of the gods ; among friends all things are common ; therefore everything is the property of the wise." Nor is it any wonder that with men who identified happiness with self-sufficiency, the loss of the feeling of dependence involved the loss of all truly religious emotion.

For the rest, we may distinguish two phases in the attitude of the Cynics towards the popular religion. Venomous scorn for it, for its practices and its ministers, was displayed by the earliest founders of the sect. Antisthenes is said to have declined to contribute towards an offering to Cybele, the mother of the gods, with the remark that "doubtless the gods know their duty, and support their own mother." When an Orphic priest extolled the happiness of the initiated in the world beyond, he is reported to have exclaimed, "Why, then, do you not die?" Diogenes, too, is said to have expressed his contempt for the Eleusinian mysteries in the words, "Patæcion the thief" (a Greek Cartouche), "having been initiated at Eleusis, is more certain of bliss than Agesilaus or Epaminondas." But both Antisthenes and Diogenes loved to dwell on the myths and elicit profound meanings from them by dexterous turns of exegesis. Such exercises were not to the taste of their successors, who were still more assiduous in their attacks upon popular beliefs. Their least deadly weapon was parody, some examples of which, marked by undeniable wit, were composed by Crates and Bion on the model of the Homeric poems. With Menippus the Syrian and his fellow-countryman Meleager, parody rose to satire, and they undertook a thorough sifting of current views on life, as well as of religious opinion. Echoes of their writings reach us from the pages of Lucian, a scoffer who, much as he disliked the Cynics, may often be observed standing on their shoulders. The summit of achievement in the aggressive line was reached by Œnomaus of Gadara, who lived in the second century A.D., the author of a blustering invective, steeped in "Cynic bitterness." In "The Detected Jugglers" the oracles were scourged as the offspring of falsehood and fraud. A long series of responses given by the god at Delphi was passed in review, and arraigned, not merely for

the ambiguity which was the veil of ignorance and for their incompatibility with the self-determination of the individual, but for their subservience to tyrants, for a barbarity which went to the length of enjoining human sacrifices, and for their glorification of immoral poets and useless athletes.

8. When we survey Cynicism as a whole, the impression received varies very greatly, according to whether we fix our attention on the doctrines of the sect or the individual work of its members, and again according to whether we consider its immediate, its remoter, or its remotest consequences. The ethics of the school were purely individualistic. The end of actions was the happiness of the agent; this, again, rested upon his independence of the external world, and this upon the development of his judgment and the steeling of his will by constant exercise and renunciation. None of the precepts that have been preserved to us relate to the promotion of the general welfare. The most that can be cited is their adoption of Heracles as a patron saint and model. But his unwearied labours were chiefly commented upon with reference to the rooting up or the taming of the passions which militate against happiness. In reality, however, benevolent and philanthropic sentiments were regarded as part of the typical Cynic character. Again and again we meet with the picture of the man who mixes with the masses, with the degraded and the despised by choice, strives earnestly after the healing of their souls, and, if reproved for keeping such company, answers, in words strangely reminiscent of a passage in the Gospel (Matt. ix. 11): "The physicians also go about among the sick, but are themselves whole." We have no means of gauging the influence of the Cynic moral sermon. In any case it did something towards paving the way for what may be called a softened and less one-sided form of Cynicism, and helped to make possible the widespread dominion of the Porch. Thus, indirectly at least, Cynicism contributed to momentous and deep-reaching changes in both political and social relations, foremost among which we may mention the substitution of monarchy for the *régime* of small republics, and (the spiritual counterpart of this, if we may call it so)

the triumph of monotheism over polytheism. Western humanity owes a great and incontestable debt of gratitude to these men. They introduced new standards of value, and upheld an ideal of plain, simple, and natural living, which soon purged itself of its original taint of dross, and remained an enduring possession of the civilized world. The thirst for pleasure, for gold, and for power has not, for all that, disappeared from among men. But the mere existence of an opposing principle, one to which mankind has again and again reverted, often most strenuously when the need was greatest, has prevented the mighty forces of greed and selfishness from acquiring universal and undisputed sovereignty.

But while Cynicism has aided progress as by the working of a wholesome leaven, it must not be denied that the full realization of its ideals would have been the direst calamity which could have befallen mankind.

> "The good and evil cannot dwell apart :
> The world's a mixture——"

says Euripides, and his words are particularly applicable to Socratism, a movement whose fairest fruits and foulest weeds grew side by side. No greater blessing could have been conferred upon the world than the preaching of the doctrine that all human ordinances and precepts must submit to stand before the bar of reason, there to be judged by the measure of their fitness for their purposes, their usefulness, their salutary operation. But it is one thing to erect a supreme court of judgment to proclaim the indefeasible rights of criticism ; it is quite another to assign to criticism the work of positive construction, and so transform the judge into an architect. Attempts of this nature are fore-doomed to failure in every age. But their success was a pure impossibility in an age which lacked the historical sense altogether, and had not mastered the deeper problems of psychology. It was not a mere risk, it was an absolute certainty, that the more patent and palpable, but on the whole less important, utilities would thrust into the background others of greater moment but

less easily discerned. Men who took pattern by the brute and the savage, and who, with such examples to guide them, proceeded to lop off the excrescences of civilization, were sure to lay violent hands on much that is the fruit of an evolution, leading in the main from the lower to the higher, whose stages must be measured in myriads of years.

There is an extreme case which throws a lurid light on this subject. We need not be horrified—so Diogenes thought—at the idea of a "Thyestean meal." Let us examine the matter. What is there, traditional morality apart, to hinder the enlightened, civilized man from feasting on the flesh of his own child, of his friend, of any man? Not conscience; for the forbidden act is neither directly nor indirectly hurtful to any sentient being. The true obstacle is a deep-rooted instinct of reverence, resting in the last resort on the power of association. Between an honoured or a loved personality, or one merely respected as human, and its now soulless husk, the mind has created a bond almost too strong to be broken. Thus it is with the body bereft of life; but things which never possessed life may also have a claim on our forbearance, our reverence, even our self-sacrificing devotion; for example, portraits, graves, the soldier's flag. And if we do violence to our nature, if we succeed in breaking by main force the bonds of association, we lapse into savagery, we suffer injury in our own souls by the loss of all those feelings which, so to speak, clothe the hard bed-rock of naked reality with a garniture of verdant life. On the maintenance of these overgrowths of sentiment, on the due treasuring of acquired values, depend all the refinement, the beauty, and the grace of life, all ennobling of the animal instincts, together with all delight in and pursuit of art—all, in short, that the Cynics set themselves to root up without scruple and without pity. There is, no doubt, a limit—so much we may readily concede to them and their not too uncommon imitators of the present day—beyond which we cannot allow ourselves to be ruled by the principle of association without incurring the charge of folly or superstition. The latter, indeed, is nothing else than the result of carrying the principle to extravagant

lengths. A man who can lightly leave the house of his fathers, in which he and his have passed through the manifold vicissitudes of life, may justly be taxed with want of feeling. But he who cannot tear himself away from the old home, even though the walls are crumbling to instant ruin, can only be called superstitious or oversensitive, according to the nature of his motives.

In the comparative estimation of original and acquired values, it is not often that *a priori* reasoning succeeds in tracing the frontier-line with complete exactness. In this, as in all great questions affecting human life, any delimitation that is to be of use must be in the nature of a compromise between competing claims based on specific experience. The reason is obvious. The high degree of complication which obtains in all human affairs, and the discrepancy, not in exceptional cases but in the average case, between the immediate and the remote results of a given institution or action, justify us in dismissing as chimerical all proposals to solve moral or social problems on the lines of the simpler problems of mechanics, by a calculation of the joint effect of known causes. The radicalism which forgets this is in every country and in every age doomed to sterility. A noble people breaks with its past and goes forth in quest of liberty. It finds, however, nothing better than equality; the dissolution of unifying bonds destroys the cohesion of society, robs it of all power of corporate action or resistance, and leaves it the ready prey of a despot. Then, for at least a century, that people stumbles along blindly from one short-lived experiment to another. Such is the universal experience of history; and Cynicism, so far as it aimed at the immediate realization of a new moral and social ideal, was no exception to the rule. Considering it, however, as one among many factors in human progress, we may say that the world would have been poorer without it, and that it exercised a most salutary influence by its antagonism to the forces of inert conservatism and narrow-minded prejudice.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE MEGARIANS AND KINDRED MOVEMENTS.

1. To the east of Athens, not far from the Diomean gate, on a low hill flanking the mighty cone of rock named Lycabettus, there stood a shrine of Heracles, and a gymnasium which was used by the illegitimate sons of Athenian citizens. It was in this building, named the Cynosarges, that the half-breed Antisthenes taught, under the protection of the patron saint of the Cynics. We may be sure that ethics was not the only subject on which he gave instruction. Probably the Homeric studies which occupied so large a place in his writings, and which were pursued with much vigour in other Cynic circles, were not unrepresented in his curriculum. Thirdly, and perhaps lastly, he no doubt devoted some attention to the metaphysics of knowledge. This subject formed the connecting-link between his teaching and that of the other Socratic schools, in particular the Megarian, as it was called. And as the two mutually illustrate each other, while the successors of Antisthenes tended more and more towards an exclusive devotion to ethics, we have thought it best to omit this particular branch of the first Cynic's work in our general account of Cynicism, and treat of it in connexion with the doctrines of the Megarian and kindred Socratic schools.

We cannot approach this subject without an expression of regret that our sources of information yield so slender a stream. Nor is it merely the niggardliness of the record of which we have to complain. The mighty genius and the wonderful literary art of Plato have thrust into the

background the doctrines and the writings of his Socratic comrades and rivals. They were left stranded, off the main line of philosophic development; and, in addition to neglect, they had to suffer contempt and obloquy at the hands of both Plato and Aristotle. The cursory allusions with which they are honoured by the two great leaders of thought are almost without exception of a polemical nature, nor are the polemics marked by too strict a regard for historical truth and justice. The reader is presented with a curt rejection of an opponent's theory; he is not assisted towards any understanding of the state of mind out of which it arose, or of the problems it was intended to solve. "Grey-bearded beginners," "poverty-stricken intellects," "Antisthenes and other uneducated persons," "simplicity," "silliness,"—such are the terms of opprobrium with which we are introduced to the doctrines now under consideration. In order, therefore, to understand these doctrines and judge them rightly, we must divest them of the partisan disguise under which they are presented to us; and our first endeavour must be to ascertain how they arose and what were the exact limits of their original application.

It is, indeed, no small injury that has been done by the heavy hand of the two great philosophers. Though the wish to do justice remains, the power is almost gone. But in addressing ourselves to the task of doing our part in the righting of a prescriptive wrong, we have the valuable assistance of powerful allies. In recent times Herbart and his followers were troubled by the very same difficulties of thought as Antisthenes and the Megarians. Nothing, therefore, could be more natural than that from this quarter should come the first impulse towards an impartial estimate of the solutions which had been proposed by those depreciated philosophers.

First of all, we owe the reader some account of Megara and the thinkers who had their home there. The mere fact that the name of the city was also the name of a philosophical school is not without significance. The truth is that the leaders of that school found their course marked out for them to some extent by the peculiar situation and

history of their country. Megara was a near neighbour of Athens, and between the two cities there existed an immemorial border-feud. But in the race for power Athens had far outstripped her rival. The latter, after a beginning full of promise, after having sent colonists to the Bosporus where they founded Byzantium, and to Sicily where they founded a second, the Hyblean, Megara, experienced first a sudden arrest of development and then a rapid decline. That war of classes, whose grim echoes reach us in the lines of Theognis, had here raged with greater violence and pertinacity than elsewhere, and had shattered the fabric of the State. Megara had the misfortune to lack that which carried other Greek cities past the stormiest phases of the class-struggle, a not too short-lived tyranny. It is not surprising that there was little friendly intercourse, and not much good will, between the neighbour-cities. The Athenian with his metropolitan pride looked down on the rustic and provincial Megarian, whom he was always ready to accuse of boorishness and dishonesty. "Megarian tricks" is the term used by the Attic comedians to stigmatize an ill-bred practical joke. Abuse of this nature was probably requited in kind, with all the added bitterness which comes of unsuccessful rivalry. Thus it was the natural destiny of Megara, once philosophy took root in its soil, to become the centre of the opposition to the systems which came from Athens. And this is what actually happened. The Athenian schools of philosophy may be compared with the main column of a victorious army; the Megarians resemble a body of sharpshooters who hover on the enemy's flank, harass his rearguard, and check his advance. To spy out the joints in the Athenian harness, to pursue the dogmatic schools—Aristotelian, Stoic, Epicurean—with a running fire of pungent criticism, was a task for which the thinkers of Megara were always ready and willing. Perhaps, too, some influence should be allowed to the difference of race; the positive Dorian temperament, with its love of clear-cut, precise statement, and its tendency to rigidity of ideas formed a strong contrast to the greater wealth of thought, the greater versatility and suppleness of the Ionian intellect.

And it may be that the same taste for the grotesque, which could on occasion find vent in knockabout farce, lent zest to the construction of logical pitfalls. Of all the schools which flourished at Athens, the only one towards which the Megarians maintained an attitude of habitual friendliness, not even in this instance uninterrupted by skirmishes, was the Cynic school; and this, with its *clientèle* of half-breeds, proletarians, and cosmopolitans, was precisely the one whose connexion with the general life and thought of Athens was the slightest.

Thus the spirit of criticism throve and grew strong in the bracing highland air of the little Dorian settlement. But its ultimate influence was to extend far beyond the bounds of its original home. From it sprang the great sceptical movement which, stubbornly true to its real self under manifold changes of form, has continued through the centuries to work its appointed task. Some positive systems it has utterly overthrown, upon others it has forced radical revision; everywhere it has resisted the benumbing influence of dogma; and, in its capacity of a leaven and corrective, has rendered service to the progress of thought whose magnitude it would be difficult to exaggerate.

2. The founder of the Megarian school was Euclides. He appears to have belonged to the older generation of the pupils of Socrates. But it was not by Socrates alone that he was influenced. Among the scanty records of his teaching we find no statement more full of significance than the one which ascribes to him a blending of Socratic doctrine with Eleatic. Socrates had taught the unity of virtue, and its absolute identity with Good. The Eleatics had asserted the unity of Being. In the mind of Euclides the two doctrines were fused together. He held that the unity of Being was identical with the Good. According to trustworthy accounts, he "designated the One Good by many names, sometimes speaking of it as Wisdom, sometimes as Deity." And the Good constituted for him the whole of Being; to its opposite, the Not-Good, he denied all existence. These curt notices require some explanation, and supply abundant food for reflexion. First of all, we

have here the earliest instance of a tendency which left its impress on several successive periods of philosophy—the tendency to retain the teaching of Socrates, but not to rest satisfied with it. Socratism was haunted by a sense of its own incompleteness. Socrates himself had brushed aside the physical and metaphysical speculations of his predecessors. But his disciples, both of the first and of the second generation, resumed the discarded studies, and endeavoured to combine them with their master's ethical teaching. Not only did this impulse towards fusion give rise, as we shall see later, to the Stoic and Epicurean schools; it dominated the life-work of Plato, whose constant effort was to supplement Socratism by means of the earlier forms of thought—Heraclitism, Eleaticism, Pythagoreanism. As a richly developed organism, producing new and complicated structures at every phase of its growth, contrasts with the most elementary types of life, so the speculations of Plato contrast with the humbler attempts of Euclides. The latter merely ethicized, if the term is permissible, the metaphysics of Elea, and supplied the ethics of Socrates with a concrete or objective basis. That which gained by this procedure was not the Socratic doctrine, but the doctrine of the All-One, which, without receiving any increase of fruitfulness, was in a manner rounded off and carried to its natural completion. For Parmenides, the One Existent had been primarily that which fills space, and secondly a primordial entity endowed with thought; Melissus had promoted it to the possession of feeling and a consciousness of its own blissful state. When Euclides the Socratic goes on to identify it with the Good, and applies to it the name of Deity, may we not, in spite of all the ambiguities attaching to the word "good," conclude that to the functions of thought and feeling there has now been added an element of will? We observe, not without some amusement, that all the elements of human personality which were so strictly banished from the Eleatic universe have been carefully reunited, though by no means fused into a living personality; and we recognize the astonishing and invincible force of the personifying instinct.

That which seems to us the strangest feature in this system, the denial of the reality of evil, the identification of the Not-Good with the non-existent, has no lack of parallels, nearer or more remote, modern as well as ancient. The great Abelard is famous as the first of the mediævals who essayed to distinguish between the "good" in the ethical sense and the "good" as identified with reality by means of the mediating conception of perfection. We remember how the genius of Augustine was displayed in the attempt to represent evil as purely privative. Similarly, there have been optimists among the moderns who held evil to be only "appearance." Even thinkers of the most recent times have not always withstood the temptation to confound the utterly distinct spheres of the morally good and the merely stable or existence-conserving. This is particularly apt to be the case with those inquirers who undertake to found ethics upon zoology, and who do not scruple to identify the moral virtues with the qualities which win success in the struggle for existence.

The Megarians, as a school, may be described by the term Neo-Eleatics. That which was new in their procedure was the nature of the subject-matter to which they applied the old canons of thought. This is at once apparent from a cursory glance at the two chief problems to which these philosophers devoted themselves. In technical language they are known as the Problem of Inherence and the Problem of Predication. Two questions are raised: "How can a subject possess many different predicates?" and "How can a predicate belong to many different subjects?" For example: "How can a tree be at one and the same time green, leafy, fruitful, and so forth?" and "How can the one green, or greenness, be attached, at the same time, to many trees, to grass, to rivers, and other things?" In other words, "How is the unity of a thing to be reconciled with the plurality of the attributes which inhere in it? and how is the unity of an attribute to be reconciled with the plurality of the things in which it occurs?" As will be seen, the two questions are at bottom one. It is concerned with the relation of unity to plurality. Now, the

Eleatics had denied all possibility of any such relation. Their successors, the Megarians, did the same. The chief difference was that the earlier thinkers gave their chief attention to the many in succession, to the problem of variation and change, and were governed in their treatment of it by the two postulates regarding matter which had gradually been developed by the nature-studies of the Physicists.

Before we proceed, a word of explanation, we had almost said of appeasement, may be necessary. For the reader may be inclined to protest, with some impatience, that these are idle and perversely subtle questions, wilfully and violently dragged into the field of discussion by quibblers bent on winning cheap triumphs. But such a view of the situation may be shown to be altogether wide of the mark. These same questions provided constant employment for the ancient intellect, and that by no means exclusively within the limits of the Megarian school and the cognate circle of the early Cynics. In the problem of predication, more particularly, we shall see one of the main motives of the most illustrious doctrine of the most illustrious among Greek thinkers: we shall discover it to be one of the roots of Plato's doctrine of ideas. Even when this brilliant creation had been given to the world, his mind was far from having found satisfaction. The question, "How can the many beautiful things participate in the one beauty without the latter being torn into shreds and fragments?" vexed the soul of the great philosopher to the end of his days. From the problem of predication, again, there sprang a controversy upon the true nature of universal concepts and their relation to individual things which occupied the keenest and profoundest brains of the Middle Ages. Far and wide men debated the question with as much warmth as if it had been one of practical politics. In the twelfth century, and again in the fourteenth, the lecture-rooms of the Sorbonne and the convocation-halls of the clergy rang with the discussion of it. Lastly, the whole educated world was divided by it into two hostile camps, which, under the leadership of the Dominican and Franciscan orders, were

ever ready to rally to the battle-cries of Realism and Nominalism. Nor can we take refuge in the supposition that the ancient and the mediæval world were victims of an illusion which has spared the moderns. Not so many years back, an eminent historian of philosophy emphatically rejected the view that the great controversy of the Middle Ages can now be treated as old lumber, or as an infantile disease which modern thought has outgrown. The main problem is regarded by many metaphysicians as still unsolved, and, more than that, the purely negative solution of it which the Megarians preferred has been championed in our own century by a school of philosophy whose influence was once powerful and is not yet extinct. Johann Friedrich Herbart* and his followers held that "An existence, as such, is not only incapable of possessing many attributes; it cannot possess a single attribute distinct from itself." And considerable light is thrown on the close relationship between Megarian and Eleatic doctrine, when we learn that for Herbart the two contradictions which "pervade all phenomena, all our empirical concepts," are "the contradiction of the thing with many attributes, and the contradiction of change."

3. There is thus no reason for doubting the sincerity of the ancient Herbartians; at the same time, it seems not superfluous to give a more exact account of the origin of these difficulties, especially as they have become entirely foreign to the habits of thought of many of us. The root and ground of them is perhaps to be discerned in those judgments which have recently been called "contaminating" judgments, or judgments of identity. They are of the following type: "The building which I see before me is my friend's house;" "The man of whom I dreamt last night is my father;" "The chief intermediary between ancient philosophy and modern culture is Cicero the Roman." In such cases the predicate is placed on a footing of complete equality with the subject, is asserted to be one with it or identified with it; the word "is" fulfils the same office as

* Born 1776, died 1841.

the sign = in arithmetical or algebraical notation. When the mind had once become familiar with this use of the copula, it was inevitable that it should find a stumbling-block in another class of judgments, all those, namely, in which the predicate denotes a quality ascribed to the subject, as, "This leaf is green," or "Socrates is musically educated." Nothing could have been more natural than that the precisely similar use of the same linguistic expedient in both classes of judgment should in the first instance have led to the opinion that its function was the same in both. But this view was attended with serious difficulties. If "this leaf" and "green" were to be connected, so to speak, by the sign of equality, a twofold objection presented itself. For neither is this leaf green and nothing but green, nor is greenness a property of this leaf and nothing else. As long as this form of judgment was not kept strictly separate from the "contaminating" type, a deceptive impression was produced that there was no room in this leaf for any other quality, such as extension, or shape, and that greenness, or the property of being green, which really belongs to a great many other things, was contained in this leaf exclusively. Thus the employment, in cases incompatible with identity, of the form of speech commonly used to denote identity raised the double question we have already stated—How is it possible to ascribe many predicates to one subject and many subjects to one predicate?

This was not the first difficulty to which the use of the verb "to be" gave rise. A prominent use of this word is to denote existence, and when employed in this sense it expresses duration and continuance, as opposed to all manner of mutation and change. Now, the objects of sense, at all events, exhibit incessant superficial variations; and the due perception of this fact, in the absence of a theory of matter sufficiently advanced to point out the persistent substratum, led to a denial of being or existence, in the strict sense, to the physical universe. The reader has already been made acquainted with this phase of thought in connexion with the Eleatic school; our chief reason for recurring to the subject is to show clearly the

intimate relationship between the earlier problem of change and the twofold problem of predication and inherence which emerged later on. There is, further, a collateral offshoot of the problem of change which deserves, at least, a passing mention. The attribution of existence to the varying properties of the objects of sense was soon recognized, even outside Eleatic circles, as not wholly free from difficulty. The double use of the word "is," as copula and as denoting persistence, led to such judgments as "This leaf is green" being considered illegitimate, because they seemed to exclude all possibility of the leaf afterwards turning yellow or red. Some, therefore, as, for example, Lycophron (Vol. I. p. 493), simply omitted the word "is" in predication; others evaded the difficulty, and others like it, by employing locutions such as "The sun shines," instead of "The sun is bright."

With regard, however, to the main problem in its twofold form, the linguistic stumbling-block might have been soon removed by the simple reflexion that the copula is called upon to perform several fundamentally distinct functions. What lent the puzzle vitality was the circumstance that the difficulties of language were associated with difficulties of thought, and those of no mean order. It was not enough to recognize that the qualifying or modifying judgments do not imply fusion or contain any statement of identity; the further question presented itself—What, then, do they contain? Still more indispensable than the above negative result was its positive complement—an account of the true import of those judgments and of the justification we have for enunciating them. What, it might be asked, is the integrating bond which gives unity and coherence to the many properties, predicates, or attributes in the one subject to which they are attached? And wherein consists the unity of a predicate which is affirmed of many, in other respects vastly differing subjects? The phenomenalistic doctrines of which our exposition will more than once have to take account will compel us to consider the first of these problems. The second, the problem of predication in the narrow sense, is one which exhibits a far greater wealth of

development than its fellow, and we shall have to recur to it when we come to the Platonic doctrine of ideas. All the same, it will be necessary to give at least a sketch of the chief phases of its history before we proceed.

4. Here again we find a difficulty of language and a difficulty of thought entwined together. The first is not new to the reader. We have already had several occasions to notice it (Vol. I. pp. 195, 434). The fact that abstractions on the one hand, and the objects of sense on the other, are designated by the same part of speech, the noun, at once testifies to a corresponding assimilation in the minds of the originators of languages, and does not a little to promote and perpetuate the same confusion in the minds of those who speak them. We talk of whiteness and blackness, of heat and cold, as if they were things, and the result is that we experience an ever-growing difficulty in recognizing the illusion. To this must be added—omitting minor considerations—that among the objects of cognition there are some of great value, some even of paramount dignity, which can only be designated by substantives, or, at least, are commonly so designated. We affirm things to be blue or red, but we also speak of their blueness or redness; we speak of the goodness of that which is good and the justice of that which is just, and we soon find ourselves driven to choose between holding such abstractions to be unreal, and regarding them as realities or existences more or less of the nature of things. Let us imagine a mind—we are here approaching the main philosophical problem—which has long pondered over this riddle, and which finds a difficulty in dealing with the world of matter. The many and diverse objects of sense, lacking as they do all permanence and continuity, are, on this account alone, held in contempt, and denied all share in true Being. How, then, do they come to possess common attributes? from what source are order and symmetry, above all, beauty, imparted to them? Let us imagine a mind at grapple with this question, and we shall understand how the ground was prepared for the vision which flashed on the intellectual eye of Plato. The heaven of ideas, that is, of universal

concepts regarded as real existences, begins to overarch the phenomenal world of sense. An intellect of comprehensive range, little disposed to the study of detail, but living and working among the universals, whether of metaphysics, of ethics, or of mathematics, sees in that vision the one thing which is—the sole reality. But the matter cannot end here. The relations of those higher realities to the lower individual objects still need clearing up. Are the former the glorious originals, the latter the tame copies? Or are we to speak of an indwelling of the ideas in the things, or a participation of the things in the ideas? These and kindred questions give rise to endless discussion.

But one fine day the shrill voice of dissent intrudes upon the conference. Doubts begin to be audibly expressed touching the reality of those forms which have revealed themselves to the rapt vision of the seer. The individual thing, lately banished in disgrace to the realm of shadows, reasserts its title to full existence, and claims to be taken more seriously than those incorporeal essences which no eye has ever seen, and whose reality is vouched for by no process of valid proof. A reaction sets in, the force of which is in large measure due to the teaching of a sound instinct that illusions such as language engenders have to do with the matter. It is not with things but with mere names that you are dealing: such is the cry that greets the architect of this heavenward-soaring edifice of brilliant theory. Horses we know, and men we know; sweet things, cups, tables, are not unfamiliar to us. But with your equinity and your humanity, with sweetness, cuppishness, and tabularity we are unacquainted. Thus exclaims Antisthenes, and he is echoed by another writer, favourable to him but hostile to Plato, the historian Theopompus. "Nominalism" is the term used to describe this reaction against the form of thought called "Realism." As a movement it dates from the fourth century; though the note of protest had been sounded earlier, as in certain memorable utterances of the so-called sophist Antiphon, which have already engaged our attention (Vol. I. p. 434). Sturdy common sense, hostility to all that is visionary or extravagant, perhaps, too, a strong

feeling of individuality for which a particular person, or indeed a particular thing of any kind, was the type of complete reality, may well have been among the forces which swelled the tide of reaction. And it was part of the Cynic temperament to press the extreme view, to insist on the radical solution, rather than seek for a *via media*. In every department of thought, in morals, politics, or theology, this school could tolerate no hint of compromise. In the case of Antisthenes, philosophical antagonism to Plato may have been heightened by the personal pique to which he gave expression in his "Sathon," a violently polemical work, in which he did not spare even the name of his great adversary. But we cannot decide the question with certainty, any more than we can determine who was the aggressor in the quarrel. On the other hand, there is a circumstance of a different order to which we may safely point as having conditioned his nominalism. Antisthenes was influenced by the Eleatics; possibly through the medium of his teacher, Gorgias, himself the pupil of Zeno; possibly through other channels. We learn from an allusion in Plato, of the most unmistakeable kind, that he shared with that school its fundamental postulate concerning the incompatibility of unity with plurality. But while unable to reject this main postulate of the Eleatics, he was equally unable to accept their cardinal doctrine of the unreality of individual things; thus the one possibility which remained open to him was to take refuge in nominalism. For as he could not reconcile the unity of an attribute or of a universal concept with the participation in it of a host of individual things deemed by him to be real, he was under the same necessity of denying the objective reality of universals as the Eleatics had been of denying that of particular existences.

5. Closely connected with his solution of what may be called the problem of predication in the narrow sense, is his logical treatment of the other branch of that problem, that of inherence, as it may be termed when regarded from the metaphysical point of view. He maintained that of one subject there cannot be affirmed many predicates, nor even one predicate different from itself.

There is unambiguous testimony to the effect that he held no judgment admissible except those in which the subject and the predicate are the same. In other words, he is reported to have disallowed all propositions but those of the identifying type, such as, "Sweet is sweet;" "The good is good." At this point, we naturally feel some astonishment, if not dismay. Here is a thinker, the author of many works, the preacher of many doctrines, who rejects all the forms of assertion which are capable of conveying real information, and accepts only those which are void of all content, which carry our thought never a step further, but leave it to revolve in an aimless circle. From this difficulty, if we are not mistaken, the following considerations afford a means of escape.

Antisthenes treated of definitions. Such, for him, is a proposition which sets forth "what it (the object of definition) is or was." Aristotle, we may remark by the way, clearly followed this precedent in constructing his metaphysical terminology. Antisthenes thus drew a distinction between the simple elements of knowledge and the combinations of them. The former, which he compared with elementary speech-sounds, were regarded by him as incapable of being subsumed under determinate concepts. In their case the question "What?" had no answer. They were objects of perception, not of cognition in the strict sense of the word. A man who inquired their nature could only be referred to his own experience; what was new and strange to him could only be brought to his knowledge by a statement of the resemblances between it and other things with which his experience had already familiarized him. Supposing, for example, that some one who had never seen silver was to be taught the whiteness or the metallic lustre of that substance, the right thing to do would be to tell him that it was "like tin." The case was otherwise with combinations or complexes of experiences which, in pursuance of the same metaphor, he compared with syllables. Just as the latter might be adequately taken account of by pointing to their constituent elements, so also might the syntheses of experience, the only true "objects of cognition."

This cognition was, indeed, nothing else than a consciousness of the elements of which the objects were compounded. All that one had to do was to enumerate them, which, as he remarked, was a "long story." The expression is not without a suggestion of contempt, and was no doubt deliberately used in disparagement of the great significance attached by Socrates and many Socratics to the construction of definitions. On the substratum of these empirical syntheses, the transcendental reality of them, to use the modern terminology, these nominal definitions have nothing to tell us. Antisthenes, like many modern nominalists, ignored these questions altogether. He would also seem to have neglected the distinction between those attributes which belong to the essence of a thing and those which have a merely external or accidental attachment to it. Each new lesson of experience could, on these principles, be incorporated in the meaning of a name, and be ever afterwards regarded as comprised in its connotation. From this standpoint we can understand how Antisthenes was able to formulate or employ propositions containing new information, and yet declare them to be merely identical judgments. Let us imagine, for example, that the discovery had been made in his day that whales, in spite of their fish-like form, do not lay eggs, but bring their young into the world alive. He would at once have found room for the new attribute in the nominal definition of a whale, and thenceforth he would have been fully justified in regarding the proposition, "Whales (that is to say, creatures having many points of resemblance to fishes, but producing living young) bring their young into the world alive," as an identical judgment. Old truths, such as "All men are mortal," could be treated by him in a similar manner. He would have declared mortality to be part of the meaning of the word "man." Thus propositions such as in modern terminology are called synthetic (that is, involving a putting together) were for him transformed into propositions of the kind we describe as analytic because they involve a breaking up into parts.

These considerations will serve to illustrate another doctrine which is ascribed to Antisthenes. He is reported

as having maintained that all contradiction is impossible. For, if two persons use the same name, there are two conceivable alternatives. They may use that name in precisely the same sense, with full and concordant knowledge of its import; in that case the harmony of thought will necessarily produce harmony of utterance. But if this condition is not fulfilled, the two persons are not speaking of the same thing; and there is no contradiction in making different affirmations of different things. This is the furthest point up to which we can follow the Antisthenic theory of knowledge with any certainty. Any advance beyond this is checked both by the meagreness of the sources, and by difficulties of a critical order. The allusions contained in the writings of Plato are not meant to be taken as strictly historical, and that which is historical in them is by no means easy to separate, with any exactness, from the additions and modifications of a poet-philosopher who always allowed himself a free hand in dealing with facts. The statement that Antisthenes placed the "investigation of names" in the forefront of his theory of knowledge is sufficiently intelligible from what we have already said. It by no means justifies us in transforming a thinker who manifestly set out from Eleatic premisses into an adherent of the anti-Eleatic Heraclitus, or a nominalist who contrasted names with realities into a champion of the nature-theory of language which regarded names as the truest copies of things.

6. The critical examination of these doctrines need not detain us long. Both their weakness and their strength are on the surface. It was something gained merely to have abandoned the exclusive investigation of concepts. Sole devotion to such investigations, to speak more exactly, would in all probability have brought about a wide prevalence of such faults as Aristotle castigated, severely but not unjustly, in a passage which we have already quoted (Vol. I. p. 319). The supreme end of all scientific endeavour is the knowledge of the order of the world, in the widest sense of the phrase, the gaining of some insight into the laws of succession and coexistence which obtain in the physical as well as

in the psychical sphere. The teaching of Antisthenes may be described as a small step in this direction, because it laid exclusive stress on the combinations of empirical data, not on the mere elements of them, and because it shelved the question, which transcends all experience, of their real essence. Ontological speculation, a relatively unfertile study at the best, was thus thrust on one side, and its neglect tended, in principle at least, to promote inquiry into the connexions of phenomena. It is true that this advance—if we may so term it—assumed a form which gave occasion to well-grounded objections directed against what has always been the weak side of nominalism, namely, its tendency to suggest that science is in reality nothing more than a well-constructed language—"une langue bien faite," to use the words of Condillac. Thus, in our example, the truly important thing is the discovery that the characteristic of producing living young coexists with the form of a fish, not the mere fact that an old word thereby receives a new meaning. But this truth tends to be obscured by a procedure which, instead of giving prominence to the above synthesis as such, passes lightly over it, packs it into the definition of a word, and subordinates it to the newly acquired opportunity for analysis. Such a procedure gives at least no guarantee that the work of ascertaining facts and estimating evidence shall be appreciated at its true worth and allowed that position in the mind of the inquirer which is its due. But the mischief lies still deeper. Let us concede to our nominalist full justification in his protest against the regarding of universals as things, against the hypostatizing or objectifying of them; we have still a point to make against him. Even though he may see nothing but names where his opponents see entities, the common use by mankind of those general names cannot be a mere arbitrary caprice. There must be some necessity, either in the mind or outside it, which has dictated the employment of such names, and it is for our nominalist to tell us what that necessity is. This challenge was taken up, in the Middle Ages, by Peter Abelard,* who

* Born 1079, died 1142.

hit on that compromise between nominalism and realism which is known as conceptualism. The counterparts of general names are, according to this system, on the subjective side universal concepts, and on the objective side uniformities or congruities of things—a theory which was afterwards championed by John Locke, and which, properly speaking, merely restores the natural unsophisticated view of the matter, freed from foreign accretions. But not even here could thought find rest. When men began to subject universal concepts to a closer scrutiny, a new question (first formulated with any precision by Bishop Berkeley) presented itself: Do we really possess the power of constructing such universal concepts? or is that to which we give the name merely a conglomerate of many individual ideas derived from sense, perhaps nothing more than a single idea, of whose distinguishing peculiarities we make abstraction, in order that we may use it as a representative of the class to which it belongs? Thus from the same deep well arose a continual succession of ever-fresh problems, with which the minds of thinkers have busied themselves without ceasing. And if we have dwelt on them at considerable length, our object has been to guard, as emphatically as possible, against leaving the impression that the paradoxes of those early solutions can with any show of justice be attributed to a vain love of paradox as such, or to a desire to win applause by brilliant exhibitions of intellectual dexterity.

7. When two persons do the same thing, it is the same with a difference. We are reminded of this saying when we compare Antisthenes with the Megarians. The former was an Empiricist, who set out from the presuppositions of the Eleatic method; the latter were opponents of Empiricism, who firmly adhered to the Eleatic results. They were entirely at one with him in his denial of the compatibility of unity with plurality and in his deductions from that denial, but in nothing else. Of the points of contact between the later representatives of the two tendencies, and of their mutual approach, we shall have to speak in the sequel. The Megarians inherited yet another legacy from the

Eleatics in the Zenonian dialectic which they cultivated, and which their opponents condemned under the name of Eristic. This was the most conspicuous part of their work, and it left its stamp on the school of Megara in the eyes of posterity. What their guiding motives may have been, we are in many cases no longer able to determine. One of the chief of them was no doubt the same as that which had governed Zeno in his pioneer labours, the desire to expose the contradictions which, to use the language of Herbart, traverse the whole fabric of our empirical concepts. The keenness and nimbleness of intellect which they thus developed was pressed into the service of controversy; and, lastly, they probably found some stimulus in the mere joy of detecting ambiguities of expression and obscurities of thought. These thinkers were never remarkable for breadth of interests or many-sided productivity. But they devoted themselves with ever-increasing assiduity to a task more congenial to their character of strict, one might almost say rigid formalists—that of laying bare, with merciless severity, all the delinquencies, of language or of matter, committed by those outside their own circle. They became a race of logical martinets, whose criticism was not without its terrors for Zeno the Stoic, or for Epicurus, and whose earnest endeavours after microscopic exactitude imposed an ofttimes unwelcome yoke on minds of greater fertility than their own.

At the head of this group of fighting-cocks stood a man who was noted for his personal gentleness—Euclides. Yet he was by no means deficient in keenness of intellect. He clearly discerned the laxity of the Socratic induction, against which he urged an objection that may be reproduced as follows: Either the analogy amounts to complete identity, and then it is better to draw our conclusions from the thing itself than from the objects chosen to illustrate it; or else the identity is incomplete, and then the comparison introduces a surplus—a surplus, we may add, which tends to confuse our judgment. To take a concrete example, he would have preferred to deduce the necessity of expert knowledge in statesmen from a consideration of the governing

facts of political life, not from the halting analogies supplied by the callings of the physician, the pilot, the husbandman, and the like, in which partial resemblances are accompanied by fundamental differences (cf. p. 141). For the rest, the only other feature of his method known to us is his preference for attacking the conclusions of an adversary rather than his premisses—a piece of information from which we may at least gather how great a space was filled by controversy in his works, written, we are told, in dialogue form, as well as in his oral teaching. Of his pupils the best known is Eubulides, who probably confined himself to lecturing, as no writings of his are mentioned. Among those who enjoyed his instruction, but did not become professional philosophers, were the orator Demosthenes and an historian named Euphantus. He is generally regarded as the author of certain famous fallacies which we shall now have to take into careful consideration. To us, who from our youth upwards have had our fill, perhaps more than our fill, of logical and grammatical pabulum, many of these productions of ancient ingenuity may seem somewhat flat and stale. And we are somewhat too ready to assume a wilful neglect of distinctions which, though familiar enough to us, had in those days not yet been drawn or generally recognized.

Eubulides devoted his chief attention to those arguments by which he sought to illustrate, in Zeno's manner, the difficulties bound up with our apprehension of the world of sense. Among these we must place the argument of "The Heap" (Sorites), an argument which deeply impressed both contemporaries and posterity, on which the subtle logician Chrysippus wrote a treatise in three books, without, as far as we can judge, ever really mastering the difficulties raised by it, and in face of which Cicero was still practically helpless. The question was as follows: If two grains of wheat are a small number of such grains, may we not say the same of three? And if of three, why not of four? And so the catechism proceeds till we arrive at ten, when we are asked, by way of application—How can ten grains make a heap? Another form of the same argument goes by the name of

"The Bald-head." Who has a bald head? Surely not the man who has lost but a single hair. Nor yet he who has lost only two, or three, or four, and so on. If, then, it is concluded, no addition or subtraction of a unity can transform a small number of wheat-grains into a heap, or a full head of hair into a bald head, how is it possible that either transition should ever be accomplished? This argument, to which the Stoics gave a name which we may render "the Theorem of Continuity," was naturally illustrated by a great variety of examples; thus we learn from Cicero that it was applied with equal effect to the antitheses of rich and poor, of famous and obscure, of long and short, of broad and narrow, and many other pairs of opposites. In the eyes of its author the theorem without doubt possessed the highest significance, and ranked as a new proof of the contradictory nature of empirical concepts, on a par with the cognate grain of millet argument devised by Zeno, with which the reader is already familiar (Vol. I. pp. 192, *seq.*). For our part, we hold this piece of reasoning to be worthy of the closest attention. In order to judge it rightly, we have to draw a distinction between two classes of cases—a distinction which may be easily explained in connexion with the main instance, the Heap argument itself. If we are to understand by the word "heap" a confused, indistinct assemblage, then this confusedness or indistinctness is a quality admitting of degrees, and we can return a very simple answer to the question put to us. We say that this quality does actually increase and decrease with the number of objects. The collection becomes more confused by each addition of a unit, more distinct by each subtraction of one, that is, it becomes more or less of a heap. But if it be desired to give a precise definition of a heap, we may apply the term to a collection of objects, the number of which is too great to be taken in at a glance. On this view there exists an absolute limit, different, to be sure, for different persons, or for the same person in different psychical states, but perfectly definite for a given person in a given state, and at this limiting number the collection will begin or cease to be a heap. For the Bakaïri Indian, who cannot

count up to three without the help of his fingers, this threshold will occupy a very different position from that which it will have in the case of a trained observer who has had practice in this class of experiment, or of an arithmetical virtuoso like Dase, capable of counting several dozen objects at a single glance.

In the first case the fallacy derives its plausibility from the fact that language misleads us into taking differences of degree for absolute differences. And even in the second case a cognate difficulty presents itself. For the fact to which we have just called attention, that the same collection may be a heap for A and not a heap for B, is an almost fatal stumbling-block for the unschooled mind, held fast in the shackles of language, which straightway looks for an objective existence behind every word. But, even apart from this, our second case involves a real, material difficulty —almost identical with the one we have already encountered in the grain of millet argument. For it is a matter of not unreasonable astonishment that a purely quantitative difference, which, on the analogy of numberless similar instances, we might have expected to perceive only as a more or a less, should produce a qualitatively new effect upon our consciousness at a definite stage of the increase or decrease. In the one case, consequent upon an increase of intensity in a disturbance of the air, there emerges a previously non-existent sensation of sound ; in the other, as a consequence of an increase in the number of wheat-grains, we have the loss of a previously existent ability to count them at a glance. By such phenomena as these our attention is directed to a fact, not a little surprising in itself, at variance with the most familiar analogies, and therefore extremely perplexing in the earlier stages of thought, the fact, namely, that in certain, by no means isolated, cases a change which, on the objective side, is purely quantitative, may have for its result a qualitative change in sensation, in the faculty of judging, and, we may add, even in the emotional state. For it is possible by such means to transform a pleasurable feeling into its opposite ; as when a gentle tickling, felt as agreeable, is made painful,

or even unbearable, by mere increase of intensity, or when a luxuriously warm bath is turned into a torture by mere rise of temperature.

Finally, we have to note another effect of that relative and subjective element which we have already met with in the different capacities for discrimination of different individuals, and in the practice or want of practice of any one observer, his state of undivided or distracted attention. Our mode of appreciating riches or poverty, greatness or smallness, and so on, varies very considerably with the materials for comparison which we have at our disposal in each case. This circumstance still further narrows the possibility of returning an unambiguous answer to the question—At what point of such and such an increase or decrease does a given predicate begin to be affirmable of a given subject? But the difficulty vanishes the moment we replace the positive by the comparative. The thing or being considered will actually become richer or poorer, greater or smaller, broader or narrower, with every addition or subtraction of even a single unit of the appropriate species.

It is not a metaphysical, but a logical difficulty which is embodied in a sophism which has been much canvassed under the name of the "Liar." It runs thus: "If a man lies and says he lies, does he lie or does he tell the truth?" It is made to appear that the man does both simultaneously, which was held to be a logical impossibility. One's first idea is to answer, "The statement about the false statement is true, but the latter remains false all the same." Or if it is habitual lying, not a particular lie, that is referred to, we may answer, with Aristotle, "There is no impossibility in supposing that the man habitually lies, but that in this particular instance (in the proclamation of his own mendacity) he is telling the truth." But, on the first hypothesis at any rate, the difficulty lies deeper. Can we—this is the question—describe as mendacious an utterance which is so designated by the utterer himself? First we must get a clear idea of what a lie is. We must take the conception to pieces, so to speak, and see what are

the elements that compose it. There are two of them: the divergence from truth of a statement, and the accompanying intention to deceive. In the case before us, the first is present and the second absent. Or rather, as in the Greek word for "to speak falsely" the subjective element is less prominent than in our "to lie," the truth-contradicting nature of a statement ought to have been distinguished from its *capacity* to deceive. The words contain an untruth, but the accompanying confession takes away from them the power of producing the ordinary effect of an untruth. Elements usually found associated together, and in such association making up the every-day meaning of the word "to lie," are for once disjoined. In this disjunction lies the peculiarity of the case. One might almost say that the supposed statement leaves the mouth of the speaker as an untruth, but does not reach the mind of the hearer as such. The question thus did not admit of a simple answer, but only of one hedged round with numerous reservations. The fact that Chrysippus, and Theophrastus as well, wrote bulky volumes on this very sophism shows that there was a stage of thought in which the distinctions we have just been suggesting were not easy to establish. Men were not as yet possessed with that distrust of language which animatse us moderns and frequently causes us to see in words a far from adequate expression of the facts. On the contrary, there reigned a simple and unsuspecting faith that the range of an idea and the range of that word which answers to it roughly and on the whole, must in every case exactly coincide. And yet we might just as well expect political and natural boundaries to be identical with each other, not only often, but always, and without exception.

A sophism of somewhat similar type is the one known as the "Electra," or as "The Man in Disguise." Suppose Electra, the heroine of the tragedies by Sophocles and Euripides bearing her name, as also of the "Grave-offering" of Æschylus,—suppose this Electra to be asked whether she knows or does not know her brother, who has been brought up at a distance from her, but now stands, a

stranger, before her: her answer may be shown to be false in every possible case. If she answers in the negative, she lays herself open to the rejoinder that she does know Orestes, for she is well aware that he is her brother; if she answers in the affirmative, then it may be put to her that she does not know Orestes, for she is unaware that the man before her is Orestes himself. By "knowing Orestes" is meant, in the first instance, being aware of the family tie which connects her with Orestes, but, in the second case, the identifying Orestes with the stranger now present. The confusion is increased by the circumstance that the two pieces of knowledge, that of the family tie and that of the external appearance of the near relation, usually go together. Another variety of the same argument is "The Man in Disguise." My father stands disguised before me, and if I am asked whether I know my father, my answer must inevitably be open to objection. The word "to know" is here used, firstly, of the knowledge of an object; secondly, of the knowledge of its presence. Here, too, the effect of the mere equivocation is strengthened by the fact that usually I can recognize what I know, though in the present case I am prevented from doing so by a special contrivance. This sophism seems transparent enough to us, but that it made no slight impression on those who were contemporary with its invention, and on posterity as well, appears from several considerations. For example, Epicurus, in an epistemological section of his chief work, "On Nature," vigorously denounces the "Sophist who propounded the Man in Disguise."

Another argument of but slender value is known as "The Horned Man." "Have you lost your horns?" "No." "Then you must have them; for what one has not lost, one must possess." The same fallacy was perhaps a little more effective in the following shape: "Have you ceased beating your father?" When the person interrogated had sufficiently recovered from his first indignation at the suggestion to be brought to answer a plain Yes or No, it became possible—so it was thought—to wring from him a confession that he had been guilty of that most

horrible impiety. For "I have not ceased" was construed as equivalent to "I continue," since the victim was not allowed to append the explanation: "The only reason why I have not ceased is that I never began." Even this piece of dialectical horse-play is not without a value of its own. It forces us to recognize that there are questions which cannot be answered by a bare Yes or No without producing unintentionally a false secondary impression. Such questions should not be called unmeaning, but misleading. In ordinary life the only questions asked and answered are those which rest on some valid presupposition. If a man denies having lost an article, or having ceased from an action, there is behind his words a tacit implication that he had formerly possessed the article or performed the action. Similarly in the question, "Is Napoleon in the next room?" and in the perfectly correct negative reply, we see an expression of the assumption that the subject of discourse is some person now in this house, or else in this town, or at the very least somewhere upon earth, and not a man who has been dead for many years. The confusion of negation absolute with such negation as involves a partial affirmation is even to-day by no means unheard of in philosophical argumentation. As we shall possibly have occasion to show later on, it is the neglect of this very distinction that sometimes endows the so-called axiom of the "Excluded Middle," in itself an utterly barren formula, with an illegitimate content, and makes it the source of arbitrary metaphysical assumptions.

8. The last-named variety of the "Horned Man" is ascribed to Alexinus, one of the most combative among the Megarians, who was named in jest Elenxinus (from the Greek ἔλεγχος, refutation), and whose witty and important polemic against a doctrine of the Stoic Zeno will occupy our attention in the sequel. But prior to Alexinus is Stilpo, the contemporary of the Cynics Crates and Metrocles. Next to Euclides, the founder of the school, he enjoyed the highest consideration of any of the Megarians; his personal character won him universal reverence. He revived the study of ethical problems, herein differing from

all other members of the school, and declared "freedom from emotion" (ἀπάθεια) to be the aim of life. Although in this point he approximated to the Cynics, he was distinguished from them by the fact that he avoided neither civic nor family life, so that his contemporaries were able to call him "a thorough man of the world." There is a lamentable disproportion between our knowledge of his work and the reputation he enjoyed among the ancients. The princes of his time, especially the first of the Ptolemies, paid him high honour; "all Hellas looked up to him;" "when he came to Athens, all the mechanics left their workshops in order to see him;" he was stared at "like a freak of nature." On the other hand, out of his nine dialogues (they were not distinguished by any charm of style) we possess but a single miserable little sentence: "Then Metrocles turned on Stilpo in a fury." Even these few words tell us something. We learn from them that Stilpo introduced his own personality in at least some of his dialogues—a thing which Plato never did. This mode of writing dialogue was also that of Aristotle, and we may observe, in parenthesis, it must have been practised by Diogenes; otherwise he could not have treated, in his "Panther," of the oracular response that had been imparted to him (cf. p. 156). There is a further point in which Stilpo reminds us of Diogenes. Just as the latter named one of his dialogues "Ichthyas," after a member of the Megarian school, so Stilpo wrote a dialogue for which the title was supplied by the name of the Cynic Metrocles. In both cases the object aimed at was doubtless that of settling an account with an adherent of another school. This settlement of accounts can hardly have been carried out in a hostile spirit, for the relations of the two schools were fairly friendly, in spite of occasional friction, and in spite of the raillery with which Crates deluged even Stilpo in his burlesque gallery of philosophers. In any case the two last-named men were near enough to each other in their teaching to leave a lasting impression on one and the same mind. Zeno, the founder of the Stoa, was a pupil of Stilpo no less than of Crates. In him there took place a complete

fusion of the two tendencies which had already drawn close to each other. This approximation was assisted by the circumstance that Stilpo, setting out from the epistemological postulates of the Eleatics and Megarians, had arrived at the same negative conclusions as had been accepted in the Cynic school since the time of Antisthenes.

For he, too, gave the most serious attention to the problem of predication, and he ended, precisely as Antisthenes did, by denying the possibility of predication altogether. Like Antisthenes, again, he argued against the substantial existence of generic concepts, not merely, we may be sure, in the particular shape which this doctrine took in the hands of Plato, but in its most general form. At this point we must endeavour to place the difficulties of the problem, as felt in that stage of thought, in a still clearer light than was thrown upon them at the beginning of the present chapter. We have not yet mentioned the case in which the predicate is expressed by a noun instead of an adjective. But this is the very case in which the bewildering spell of language is exerted most potently. Two sentences such as, "A is a man" and "B is a man" (in which the "a" is a modern addition, foreign to the Greek, which does not possess an indefinite article), gave rise to an impression that A was thereby completely identified with B, and that the two were fused into a single entity. Men were helpless in face of the double question: "How is it possible—supposing these two propositions to be true—for A and B to be two entities, and how is it possible for either of them to be anything else beside man?" Few will quarrel with Stilpo for not being satisfied with the Aristotelian solution of the problem, according to which the universal, Man, is immanent, as "secondary substance," in each particular man. On the contrary, all predication of the kind was for him as inadmissible as it was for Abelard, who declared that to predicate a thing of a thing was monstrous ("rem de re prædicari monstrum"). He even thought that in the phrase "to be a man" nothing was conveyed. The phrase did not apply to this man more than to that; it therefore applied to neither of them; therefore to no one at

all. In the same way, it seemed to him that the individual Socrates was divided into two by the two statements: "Socrates is white" (that is, identical with the white), and "Socrates is musical" (that is, identical with the musical). It is fortunate for the subsequent reputation of the Megarian school that these paradoxes, the boldest of those which proceeded from its adherents, were propounded by Stilpo, who is protected by the unlimited reverence paid him by all antiquity from the suspicion of having merely indulged in an idle and wanton exhibition of subtlety. In reality, these were serious difficulties with which he had to wrestle, difficulties which occupied the energies of the whole of that generation and of a considerable part of the Middle Ages, and which no one can hope to master unless he will go back to phenomena, and free himself altogether from the misleading tyranny of language. If, however, we may believe a well-informed writer, Stilpo's negations had for their positive background the old Eleatic doctrine of the All-One; and thus the absurdities which he believed himself to have detected in the world of sense were no doubt welcomed by him as so many corroborations of that doctrine.

9. It is possible, nevertheless, that, while he held the processes and the relations of the world of experience to be incomprehensible, he did not deny their reality. This, at least, clearly seems to have been the position adopted by his contemporary and fellow-pupil Diodorus, surnamed Cronus. The latter permits us to say of a movement "it has taken place," but not "it is taking place." Surely the only meaning we can attach to this distinction is that he recognizes motion as a fact, but denies that it is thinkable or conceivable. We may disregard the fact that to this dialectician is ascribed a corpuscular theory, involving the assumption of indivisible particles, and contradicting the fundamental doctrine of the Eleatics; for it may at least be regarded as probable that Diodorus merely admitted that theory for the sake of argument, in order to attack the conceivability of motion on that hypothesis too. His arguments on the subject differ little from those of Zeno, and

we consider it unnecessary to pass them in review. There is, however, one exception. Unfortunately, it happens that this one new proof is not easy to understand, while the exposition of it in the writer who is our authority for it, is by no means free from obscurities. It begins with the distinction between the *pure* motion of a mass, that is, motion shared by all the parts of it, and *preponderating* motion ; the statement is then made that the latter must precede the former. The hypothesis is then set up that two particles of a body are moving, while a third is at rest. The next assumption is that the inertia of the particle which is not moving is overcome by the motion of the other two. A fourth particle, hitherto at rest, is now set in motion by the first three. The four moving particles then disturb the peace of a fifth, and the process is repeated on a continually increasing scale until the motion extends to the whole of the ten thousand particles composing the mass. "It would be absurd," the argument concludes, "to say that a body is moving preponderatingly (by which must be meant, in virtue of the preponderating majority of its particles), of which 9998 particles are (originally) at rest, and only two in motion." Diodorus would thus appear to have considered the above-described process absurd, because an overwhelming majority is governed and overpowered by an all but evanescent minority. If this really was his meaning, he must have had a very childish idea of mechanics. For the process described by him is so little suited to the service of an argument against the possibility of motion in general, that it provides us with a representation, perfectly true to the facts, of the propagation of motion from a given point onwards, and of the gradual increase of motion. And there is absolutely nothing at all which is contrary to reason in that process if we suppose either that the impulse, which acts directly on only two particles, or even on a single one, is strong enough in itself to overcome the inertia of an enormous number of particles, or that the same effect is produced less by the strength of the original impact than by the absence of adhesive or frictional resistance combined with a latent tendency to motion in the particles at rest.

Take, for example, the case of an avalanche; here the first impulse is exceedingly small, but it is enough to occasion the fall of a great mass of snow lying loosely on an inclined plane. Or perhaps the real difficulty with Diodorus was to understand *how* the transmission is effected when an impulse, primarily manifesting itself as the motion of a few particles, and, as far as our perception goes, exhausting itself in such motion, is, nevertheless, communicated to a large mass. But in view of the inadequacy of our single source of information, it seems hardly worth while to elaborate hypotheses on the subject, still less to discuss the problem itself and the difficulties which may have attached to it at that early stage of thought.

Of much greater importance is the argument which Diodorus directed against the concept of possibility. Here we prefer to pass at once to the conclusion, and leave the process of inference by which it was reached to be considered afterwards. Cicero, in writing to his friend Varro, jestingly alludes to that doctrine as follows: "You must know that if you are going to visit me, your coming is a necessity; otherwise, your coming would be in the number of the impossibilities." The possible was for Diodorus coextensive with the actual; nothing that did not actually happen was to be called possible. We can well understand how so paradoxical a thesis gave rise to a fierce controversy, in which the close affinity of the subject to all the puzzles of fate and free will inflamed the passions of the disputants to fever heat. But at this distance of time we need have no great difficulty in recognizing that this proposition is only a profession of faith in the universal empire of causality, couched, it must be admitted, in terms which lend themselves very readily to misuse. If an event which we designate as possible never becomes actual, then one or other of the conditions necessary to its realization must have been lacking at every moment; in other words, its realization has not been possible. How is it, then, that in spite of all that, we continually distinguish between the realities of the future and its possibilities? and that we often speak of the latter without regard to the former? No

doubt it is, in the first place, our ignorance, our limited vision of the future, that is responsible for this distinction. But, in the present connexion, this point of view may be ignored. It played no part in the ancient controversies on the subject; the pros and cons were discussed on the assumption that our knowledge of the future has no limit. But even on this assumption, the keen-witted Stoic Chrysippus had something to urge against the proposition of Diodorus. The signet-ring on my finger, so he protested, may remain unbroken to all eternity, but it is breakable all the same. The mere possibility of its being broken, and the realization of that possibility at some future date, are two different things. Without any doubt Chrysippus was perfectly right, and we are all of us perfectly right in thinking and speaking of possibilities, capacities, forces, and powers without regard to their realization, their exertion, their translation into actual and palpable fact. But the proposition of Diodorus is also perfectly true. The contradiction between the two assertions may be resolved by a distinction which is not far to seek. Actuality and possibility coincide as soon as we envisage the totality of the factors which are concerned in the happening or the failure to happen of any one isolated event. If the ring of Chrysippus remains unbroken to all time, some one of the conditions requisite for the fracture must be always in abeyance, and the fracture is therefore impossible. It is very different if we limit our survey, and consider only a portion of the conditions which must be fulfilled before a given process can begin. The case is just the same with what we may almost call the complementary question—Is there, or is there not, such a thing as chance? We all of us answer this question in the negative, so far as the word "chance" is understood to imply a denial of universal, exceptionless causality. But yet we make use of the idea every day and every hour; and here again we are entirely within our rights so long as we direct our attention, not to the sum of things, or to a comprehensive circle of processes, but to a narrowly bounded region of fact.

We call it an accident when a dream is fulfilled. But we

must not, by the use of this word, dispute that both dream and fulfilment are causally conditioned. What we deny is that the two chains of causation are linked together, and that we have any justification in concluding from a recurrence of the dream to a recurrence of the fulfilment. An orchard glows with luxuriant wealth of blossom; a May frost blights the promised harvestage. In such a case we speak of an unfortunate accident, without in the least wishing to imply that the fatal spring-frost was sent otherwise than by causal necessity to destroy that which existing factors had up to now been able to produce. The courageous act which saves a human being from death threatened by fire or water is a fortunate accident relatively to the person saved, though it may be the natural and necessary outcome of the character and habits of the rescuer. And, in general, the cases in which we speak of accident or chance are those where a group of causes, in itself adapted to produce certain effects, is interfered with, and its operation nullified by a second, unrelated group of causes. Turning now to the mode of proof employed by Diodorus, we find it to have been something like the following: All that is past is what it is of necessity; its being otherwise belongs to the realm of the impossible; but the possible cannot proceed from or be caused by the impossible; therefore neither can the present or the future be other than they respectively are or will be; the notion of mere possibility thus falls to the ground. The defects of this proof are sufficiently obvious. But we have not the slightest ground for assuming that the author of the argument recognized its fallacious character. Why should he have been more sharp-sighted than the half-dozen dialecticians who treated of his thesis after him, with as it would seem entirely fruitless labour? Our criticism, however, will be somewhat to this effect. If in the premisses necessity is to be understood as causal necessity, the argument assumes to begin with the very truth it is intended to prove. It is what the logicians call an argument in a circle, a *petitio principii*. This, too, is the most favourable judgment we can pass on the demonstration, which, on such a

construction, is as harmless as it is unnecessary, being merely a roundabout mode of proving that which, for a believer in the unlimited sovereignty of cause, needs no proof whatever. It is otherwise if we understand by necessity—and this seems to have been the meaning of Diodorus—the special irrevocability which belongs to the past as such. The argument must then be ranged in that large class of fallacies that spring from the *a priori* prejudice requiring the effect to resemble the cause—a rule which holds good only for a limited, though important, category of natural phenomena, as in the conservation of matter and of energy. The invalidity of the argument, so construed, is immediately obvious. In exactly the same way, it might be proved that the past cannot give rise either to the present or the future. For how, it might be asked, can there proceed from the past that which is contrary to it, or not-past, that is to say, either the present or the future?

But we have not yet finished with that much-discussed proposition. It still remains to inquire what motive may have led Diodorus to the formulation of it. This, for once, is a question which seems to admit of being answered with tolerable certainty. Beginning with the days of Eubulides, there raged a fierce and bitter war between Aristotle and the Megarians. We know, in particular, how the former attacked the use made by Aristotle of the concept of possibility. This quarrel will best be treated later on in connection with the Aristotelian philosophy itself. For the present we content ourselves with the remark that Aristotle places potential existence by the side of actual existence on an almost equal footing, and employs it not merely as an aid to thought or expression, but as affording a real ground of explanation, in much the same manner as many physicists of to-day use their "forces," or the older schools of psychology their "powers of the soul." On the other hand, the Megarians, impelled by the same instinct which had led both them and Antisthenes to protest against the hypostatizing of abstractions, attacked this Aristotelian concept also, and endeavoured to show that the notion of possibility has no independent value, but only serves to

express our expectations of future reality. Out of this controversy—which, in the judgment of Hermann Bonitz, one of the most careful of Aristotelian students, by no means issued in a victory for Aristotle—it is very probable that this argument of Diodorus arose. For the rest there was sense and wisdom even in the whims and fancies of this eminent man. To his five daughters, all of whom he educated as dialecticians, he gave strange names, among them, it would appear, one otherwise borne only by men. He even used particles, such as Indeed and But, as names for his slaves, evidently by way of giving a drastic example of the lordly freedom with which it becomes man to demean himself towards language, of which he should be the master, not the servant. The same may be said of his assertion that it is the business of a word always to mean nothing more or less than what the utterer of it wishes it to mean. It is clear that he takes up a definite position as champion of the "conventional theory" of language (cf. Vol. I. p. 394), and on the basis of this theory sets himself to choke the most prolific source of dialectical and metaphysical errors.

10. Following the line of philosophical tradition, we have included Diodorus among the Megarians. But, in point of fact, he was born at Iasos in distant Caria; and it was only as being indirectly the pupil of Eubulides, who had himself migrated to Megara from Miletus, that he was connected with that school. We cannot tell whether his labours as teacher, from which, among others, Zeno, the founder of the Stoa, drew profit, were carried on at Athens or at Megara. The history of philosophy sometimes follows the example of astronomy, which, for the sake of a more convenient grouping, unites widely distant stars, not without some violence, into a single constellation. The seed which Socrates had scattered had sprung up gradually in many parts of Greece, even in regions hitherto left untouched by the speculative movement; and in more than one place there were close affinities between the Socratic and the Zenonian dialectic. To these must be added the powerful influence of the Cynic tendency; thus

the division by schools and sects within the main pale of Socratism is not a matter free from all artificiality. For example, Stilpo was trained by a Corinthian dialectician named Thrasymachus, who for his part was a pupil's pupil of Euclides; yet he was also reckoned among the disciples of Diogenes the Cynic. Megara was his home and the scene of his labours; but it must not be forgotten that he was not a pupil of Megarians only. Again, Alexinus both was born and died at Elis. While other dialecticians, such as Clinomachus of Thurii, were only outwardly connected with the Megarians by but slender ties, there was a strong bond of affinity between the Megarian and the Elian-Eretrian schools. We are here met by the figure of Phædo, a name dear to all admirers of the art of Plato. He was a man of noble birth and of great personal beauty, more memorable for his romantic career than his intellectual significance. Torn from his home at Elis as a prisoner of war, he became a slave at Athens, and there was dragged down to such a depth of degradation as the youths of the modern world seldom know. He was redeemed from slavery by Socrates and his friends, became a favourite disciple of the Athenian sage, and, after the death of the latter, worked as teacher and author in his native city. Of his dialogues we possess the sorriest remnants, only a few words and sentences which practically teach us nothing. We have already mentioned (p. 48) his dialogue "Zopyrus." "Simon," another of his dialogues, took its title from the name of a shoemaker, whose shop Socrates frequented or was supposed to have frequented. On the contents of this work we have only scanty information, but it has been inferred, not without some probability, that it contained an application of the Socratic ethics to simple middle-class conditions, in opposition to all that Phædo considered as one-sided over-tension, or as decadence.

With this Elian branch the ancients joined, by a somewhat external connexion, the Eretrian, because the chief representative of the latter, Menedemus of Eretria in Eubœa, counted the obscure successors of Phædo among his teachers, in addition to other Socratics, particularly

the great Stilpo of Megara. In the case of the teacher we have already noted the disproportion between his reputation and our knowledge of what that reputation was founded upon. The contrast is still more glaring in the case of the pupil, and it is heightened by the following circumstance: One of his fellow-Eubœans was Antigonus of Carystus, whose hand wielded alternately the chisel of the sculptor and the style of the historian. He wrote memoir-like biographies of contemporary philosophers, showing that taste for detail of the *genre* order which marked both the literary and the artistic productions of the Hellenistic age. He was without doubt personally acquainted with Menedemus; probably he was among his disciples; and through his agency we possess the exactest information on the personality and the career of the Eretrian philosopher. The latter was descended from a noble family, but his father was a master-builder of no very great means. He was of middle stature, of powerful, sinewy build, and bronzed by the sun. He was the foe of all pedantry, and even in the management of his school he displayed a certain free-and-easy manner. Each of his numerous pupils sat or stood, as pleased him best; the seats were not arranged in a circle, as elsewhere. Between him and Asclepiades, the friend of his youth, there was a bond of life lived completely in common which was not disturbed even by the marriage of Menedemus with a widow, and of his friend with her daughter. He was a lover of poetry. Among his favourite poets were Homer and Æschylus; in satyric drama he assigned the first place to his fellow-countryman Achæus. Among contemporaries, the didactic poet Aratus, who, like himself, was intimate with the Macedonian king Antigonus Gonatas, and Lycophron of Chalcis in Eubœa, were on familiar terms with him. We possess a description, written by the last-named poet, of those Symposia which the hospitable philosopher loved to arrange. The participants, including the pupils who would appear at dessert, regaled themselves with conversation richly seasoned with wit, in addition to moderate refreshments of wine and food, till the cock-crow warned

them that it was time to break up. He possessed great acuteness and readiness of mind; in his disposition strictness was united with gentleness. The first of these qualities was displayed by him in dealing with the son of his familiar friend, whom he excluded from his school and refused to salute, until he had recalled him to the right path from certain errors of which the nature is not known to us. Even in regard to his scientific opponents, he showed himself courteous and kind. For example, when the wife of his adversary, Alexinus, was on a pilgrimage to Delphi, he provided her with an escort to protect her from highwaymen. For, to use modern terms, the professor had become president of the small independent state. As ruler, too, he distinguished himself by circumspection and energy. At a time when the states of Greece, Athens among them, were outbidding each other in self-humiliation before the Diadochi, he earned fame by a behaviour which was as far removed from undignified flattery as it was from insolent defiance. Perfectly in accordance with this reputation of his are a few lines written by him which are still extant, and which form the opening sentences of a letter to Antigonus Gonatas, congratulating him on his victory over the Celts at Lysimachea (278 B.C.). Soon afterwards his political opponents succeeded in procuring his banishment, and he died, aged 74, at the court of that prince in Macedonia.

Of all his philosophical contemporaries, Stilpo was the one whom he honoured most highly for his elevated strain of thought. In his teaching, which was only imparted orally, he came very near Socrates. He laid strong emphasis on the oneness of virtue and its essential identity with wisdom. In religion he was as liberal as Stilpo; but the polemics of the scoffers, who appeared to him to be engaged in "slaying the slain," were little to his taste. His logical innovations, as well as the cognate propositions of Diodorus, must be left for treatment later on. Another feature connecting him with Diodorus and Stilpo is what we may call a strengthened feeling of reality—a feeling on which the giant strides of natural science were assuredly

not without some influence. Among the contemporaries of our philosopher were to be reckoned investigators like Herophilus, the founder of the empirical school in medicine; Euclid, one of the masters of geometry and optics; and Aristarchus of Samos, the Copernicus of the ancient world (cf. Vol. I. p. 121). In the forties and fifties of the nineteenth century the powerful development of thought on the lines of natural science displaced, almost without a struggle, the *a priori* systems of Schelling and Hegel; if we are not mistaken, something very like this took place in the first quarter of the third century before Christ. As our exposition proceeds, the analogy will appear with greater and greater clearness. For the present, our survey does not extend beyond a small portion of that great picture. The campaign inaugurated by the sound judgment and sturdy common sense of the Cynics against hypostatized abstractions achieved great and growing success. In Diodorus and Stilpo a close observation will detect the same tendencies. But in the case of the Eretrians, by which term Menedemus is more especially meant, we are expressly told that they "denied the substantial existence of generic qualities, and only recognized their presence in concrete individual things." In the contemplation of these men, however, that which attracts and pleases us most is the interval of peace in the bitter feud between philosophy and practical life, an interval of reconcilement with national manners and morals, during which philosophy, without raising infinite pretensions, was able to accomplish much sound and useful work. Menedemus of Eretria, the philosopher at the head of a little commonwealth, who was unjustly railed at by his opponents as being a Cynic, but was in reality full of warm-hearted love for his country, is a figure on which the eye of the historian gladly rests, as on a sun-illumined peaceful island in the midst of a troubled sea.

CHAPTER IX.

THE CYRENAICS.

1. THE torch which Socrates had kindled cast its rays not only over Eubœa or Elis: they penetrated to the furthest landmarks of the Greek world. Precisely at one such frontier point, situated on the coast of Africa, there grew up a branch school of Socratism, which flourished for several generations, and finally became extinct, only to rise again in the school of Epicurus, in which new form it was destined to divide for centuries with the Stoa the dominion over men's minds and hearts.

In the modern Vilayet of Barka, lately separated from Tripoli, to the east of the Great Syrtis, a number of Greeks had early settled, and, in course of time, founded five cities, of which Cyrene was the oldest, and enjoyed the highest consideration. Ancients and moderns agree in praising the superb site of this city, and the richness of the surrounding country. Sheltered on the south, by a chain of mountains, from the sand and the heat of the desert; situated 2000 feet above sea-level, on a terrace of the uplands which descend, staircase fashion, towards the sea; blessed with a wonderful climate, the equability of which reminds us of the Californian coast; built on the "gleaming bosom" (to use Pindar's picturesque phrase) of two mountain-domes, round about a spring which issues in a mighty gush from the limestone,—Cyrene presented in the old days, and still presents to the traveller who visits its ruins, "the most bewitching landscape that can ever meet his eye" (Heinrich Barth). Down over the green hills and the deep-cut

ravines, overgrown with broom and myrtle, with laurel and oleander, the eye is carried smoothly onward to the blue sea below, over which, in days gone by, immigrants sailed from the island of Thera, from the Peloponnese, and from the Cyclades, to this royal seat, made, one might almost say, for the express purpose of dominating the surrounding country and the Berber tribes that dwell there. The skill of the Greeks in hydraulic engineering and in road-making achieved great triumphs here. By the construction of galleries, of cuttings, and of embankments, the succession of terraces which formed the natural configuration of the ground was converted into a number of highways, which wound in serpentine curves from the seashore to the heights. The steep walls of rock at the side of the roads are pierced with openings, richly decorated by the architect and the painter. These are the entrances to countless sepulchral chambers—a city of the dead, without parallel on earth. Every watercourse was tapped before it ran dry in its limestone bed, and the innumerable conduits thus supplied were used to irrigate fields and gardens. On the mountain slopes were pastured flocks of sheep whose wool was valued at the highest price ; and in the rich grass of the meadows there gambolled noble horses accustomed to win prizes at the festival games of the motherland.

It must be admitted that for many years the pulse of intellectual life beat somewhat lazily in the far-off colony. Unending fights with natives, who had been but partially won over to Greek civilization ; big wars with the great neighbouring power, Egypt, consumed the strength of the people. Again and again it became necessary to replenish the population by fresh drafts of immigrants. Intervals of rest between foreign wars were filled up by constitutional struggles, in which monarchy, here never for long subject to restraint, maintained its existence to a late period (the middle of the fifth century), when it had disappeared in nearly every other part of the Greek world. The only parallel to Barca and Cyrene in this respect was supplied by the island of Cyprus, which further resembled them in its peripheral position and its half-Greek population. The oldest

form of poetry maintained its existence side by side with the oldest form of constitution to a later date than elsewhere. The Telegonia, the latest of the poems composing the so-called Epic Cycle, was written by Eugammon, in Cyrene, at a time (a little before the middle of the sixth century) when the epic was already out of date in Ionia and the mother-land, and had yielded place to the subjective forms of poetry. The Cyrenaic made no noteworthy contribution to the scientific and literary output of Greece until it had been united with Egypt, and had found peace under the sceptre of the Ptolemies. To this epoch belong some of the most famous of its sons—the learned and refined court-poet Callimachus, the polymath Eratosthenes, the strongly critical thinker Carneades. But before that time the soil of Libyan Hellas had already received the seed of Socratism into its bosom, and had brought forth rich fruit of a kind all its own.

2. The apostle of the new doctrine was Aristippus. It is said that this son of Cyrene met with a disciple of Socrates at the Olympic festival, was deeply stirred by what he heard from him, and induced to go to Athens and attach himself to the Socratic circle. Of the further course of his life we know little, except that he gave instruction for pay (for which reason Aristotle calls him a sophist), and that, like Plato and Æschines, he made a considerable stay at the Syracusan court. His literary activity is shrouded in almost impenetrable darkness. That several writings have been attributed to him erroneously, and others foisted upon him in the interests of particular doctrines, there seems to be no doubt. But as we find a younger contemporary of Aristippus, so competent a judge and so well-informed as Aristotle, acquainted not only with particular doctrines of his, but also with the arguments on which they rested, we cannot but suppose that they were committed to writing. Another contemporary, the historian Theopompus, accused Plato of having plagiarized from Aristippus. The charge was quite unfounded, but it could never have been made at all if the Cyrenaic had left absolutely no philosophical writings behind him. We, however, possess but a few lines

of them, nor does any fragment remain of the history of Libya attributed to him. Lost, too, are a couple of dialogues, entitled "Aristippus," in which the Megarian Stilpo and Plato's nephew Speusippus are introduced discussing his doctrines. Yet we are not without some knowledge of his personality, a sharply outlined sketch of which was preserved by the ancient world. Aristippus possessed the mastery of a virtuoso over the art of life and the art of dealing with men. He joins hands with the Cynics in their endeavour to be equal to all vicissitudes of fate; but he has less faith than they in renunciation, and in the necessity of seeking salvation by flight from the difficulties and dangers of life. The man who makes himself master of a horse or of a ship, so he is reported to have said, is not the man who declines its use, but the one who knows how to guide it in the right direction. A similar attitude seemed to him to be the right one to adopt towards pleasure. His well-known saying, "I possess, but am not possessed," is reported, rightly or wrongly, as having been originally uttered with reference to the celebrated *hetæra* Laïs; but its application was much wider than that. "To be master of things, not mastered by them," is the expression by which Horace characterizes the life-ideal of Aristippus. "Every colour," to quote the same poet again, "every condition, every situation clothed him equally well." His equanimity gained him the almost unwilling praise of Aristotle, who relates how a somewhat self-assertive utterance of Plato once drew from him the curt, cool rejoinder, "How unlike our friend!" meaning Socrates. In his disposition there was a peculiar strain of sunny cheerfulness which kept him both from anxious care about the future, and from violent regrets for the past. The almost unexampled combination of great capacity for enjoyment and great freedom from wants, his gentleness and calmness in face of every provocation, made a profound impression on his contemporaries. And though his was a peaceable nature, averse from all contention, and therefore from all participation in public life, there was yet not wanting in it an element of courage, which found expression, passively

rather than actively, in contempt for wealth and indifference to suffering. Even Cicero places Aristippus by the side of Socrates, and speaks of the "great and divine excellences" by which both men compensated any offences of which they may have been guilty against custom and tradition. As late as the eighteenth century, the spirit of the age was in sympathy with characters of this type. Montesquieu illustrates, without knowing it, the above words of self-description ascribed to Aristippus, in a phrase bearing reference to his own character: "My machine is so happily compounded that I am sufficiently sensitive to things to enjoy them, but not enough to suffer from them." And the *abbés* who frequented the *salons* of society ladies had no reason for preferring the rags of unwashed Cynics to the fashionable dress of the perfumed philosopher. But with us of the present day that type has to some extent lost favour. With the children of the nineteenth century, a strong, fervid, if one-sided, nature counts for more than the calculating wisdom and the all-round culture of the artist in life. But at least it should not be forgotten that this man with the clear cool brain was exceptionally qualified to examine and appreciate the facts of human nature with dispassionate impartiality. In Plato we find the expressions, "men of refinement," and "men of superior refinement," applied to a set of philosophers whom we have every reason to identify with Aristippus and his followers. And it is quite true that subtlety in discrimination, keenness of analysis, strictness in the deduction of consequences, were pre-eminently distinctive of the school of Cyrene.

The field of scientific interest was, for Aristippus, confined within almost as narrow bounds as for his master, Socrates. He was just as far removed as the latter from all investigations of nature, while against mathematics he is reported to have raised the not very far-sighted objection that it stood on a lower level than the handicrafts, because no part is played in it by "the better and the worse," that is, by considerations of utility and human welfare. His interest thus centres chiefly in ethics, or the science of the well-being of man; he is completely at one with Socrates

in this, and he is moved by kindred motives. His earnest endeavour after clearness and definiteness in the treatment of ethical questions is a feature which he may, perhaps, be said to have inherited from Socrates. But in Aristippus this tendency assumes a fundamentally different form. In point of method, he joins hands with Antisthenes. With both philosophers, dialectic and the search for definitions are thrust far into the background. The sure basis which they sought, was found, not in ideas, but in facts. At the same time, Aristippus avoided building upon fictitious empirical data, such as the Antisthenic conception of the primitive age. In him we find the first attempt to work back to the fundamental facts of human nature, its "Urphänomene," to use Goethe's expression. For him, as for his teacher, happiness (*εὐδαιμονία*) is at once goal and starting-point. But for the purpose of establishing its true nature, he follows the path, not of conceptional determination or definition, but of the ascertainment of facts. As the constituent element in *εὐδαιμονία* (a shifting-hued concept, varying between happiness and the highest good), he recognizes pleasurable sensation. For this, children and animals strive with an instinctive impulse, just as they seek to avoid pain. Here is the root-phenomenon, the at once incontestable and fundamental fact on which must be based, according to his view, every attempt to fix a code of rules for the conduct of human life. In order to follow the line of thought taken by Aristippus and his school, it is indispensable to be familiarly acquainted with the speculations of modern Hedonists. It is only thus that the meagre extracts, from which our knowledge of the Cyrenaic moral system is derived, become intelligible to us, only thus can the dead doctrines speak to us with a living voice. If the pursuit of pleasure is to serve as an unassailable foundation for the construction of rules to govern human life, it is necessary to observe strictly a distinction which was insisted on by Aristippus with as much zeal and as much consistency as afterwards by Jeremy Bentham. Pleasure, as such, must always and everywhere be regarded as a good, and the necessity, which, of course, occurs with great

frequency, of abstaining from pleasure, must in each case be supported by cogent reasoning. The argument involves a strict separation of the pleasurable feeling from the circumstances which produce it, accompany it, or arise out of it; and all confusion of the kind must be guarded against with extreme care. At the risk of the worst misunderstandings, both Aristippus and Bentham held with unshakable firmness to the position that pleasure *qua* pleasure is always a good, no matter what the case may be with its causes or its consequences. From the one or from the other there may arise an excess of pain; the good is then outweighed by the evil in the other scale, and the only rational mode of action is to abstain from it. In other cases, again, actions accompanied by painful feelings are the indispensable means for the gaining of pleasurable feelings —the price, as it were, which must be paid for them, a call upon us which must be met without flinching if our object is a positive balance of pleasure. The art of life is thus resolved into a species of measurement or calculation, such as Plato describes at the close of the "Protagoras"—a result which he represents as arising legitimately out of the fundamental teachings of Socrates, but which he does not appear to accept with entire inward satisfaction.

3. But before we come to the application of the doctrine, let us return once more to its logical justification. The pleasure most worth striving for was not considered by Aristippus, as it was afterwards by Epicurus, to consist in mere freedom from pain; but he was just as far from assigning such pre-eminence to violent pleasures, or those which are bound up with the appeasement of passionate desire. The name of "pleasure" denoted for Aristippus, not, perhaps, the zero on the Epicurean scale of emotion, but still a fairly low reading on the positive side of it, The mere absence of pain and the mere absence of pleasure were both regarded as "middle states."

It is by no means clear what was the precise method which Aristippus followed in constructing his more exact definition of "pleasure." We only know that he looked upon it as a kind of "gentle motion" finding its way into

consciousness, and contrasted it with the rough or tumultuous motion which is felt as pain. He cannot in this have been guided simply by observation of natural processes; for children and animals, to which he was all ready to appeal, seek the more violent pleasures as eagerly as the gentler kinds, if not more so. Was it the short duration of the most intense pleasures, or the admixture of pain arising from want and passionate desire (the ordinary precursors of those pleasures), or was it both factors together, that decisively influenced his judgment and his choice? We have every reason to frame some such conjecture. For nothing lay further from his way of thinking than the arbitrariness of a mere fiat of authority conceived as declaring the gentler pleasures to be the only admissible species, and ignoring all the others. Some rational ground for his preference appears to be alluded to in the statement, attributed to him, that "one pleasure is not different from other pleasures." Perhaps the least forced interpretation of this strange sentence is as follows: Aristippus (and the same may be said of Bentham) did not deny differences between pleasures in respect of intensity, duration, their purity, that is, freedom from admixture. What he attacked was the recognition, on *a priori* grounds, of qualitative distinctions between them, or distinctions in respect of their worth. So construed, the above sentence is nothing more than a protest against the claim to assign to one class of pleasures a precedence before others which is not supported by any process of reasoning, but rests entirely on so-called intuitive judgments.

Partial or isolated pleasures, however, were regarded by him as being immediately worthy of pursuit, not merely as a means for the attainment of that "sum of pleasurable sensations" to which was given the name of happiness or well-being. The language of the ancient excerpt is here in almost verbal agreement with that of a modern utilitarian, who, on this point at least, remained a strict Hedonist: "The ingredients of happiness are very various, and each of them is desirable in itself, and not merely when considered as swelling an aggregate." A reply was thus provided to the objection which lay close at hand, and was indeed speedily

raised, that human life offers on the whole a balance of pain rather than of pleasure. However inevitable this concession to pessimism might seem to be, it remained none the less desirable to seek the maximum of attainable pleasure, no matter whether this maximum did or did not exceed the sum of all the pain experienced in a lifetime. "Wisdom" was declared to be a good, but not an end in itself; rather was it a means towards the end just described. It preserved the wise man from the worst enemies of happiness—from superstition, and from the passions which, like "the passions of love and envy, rest on empty imagination." But the wise man could not remain exempt from all emotions, he could not escape sorrow and fear, because these had their origin in nature. Yet the wisdom based on such true insight was not in itself enough to guarantee happiness unconditionally. The wise man could not expect a life of perfect happiness, nor was his opposite, the bad man, absolutely and entirely miserable. Each condition would only prevail "for the most part;" in other words, wisdom and its opposite possessed a tendency to bring happiness and misery respectively. And even to create the tendency—note the correction of Socratic one-sidedness—wisdom alone was not sufficient; training, the education of the body not least of all, was indispensable for this purpose. Similarly, to some extent consequently, the virtues were not an exclusive privilege of the wise. Some of them might be found in the unwise as well.

This spirit of moderation and circumspection, this cautious avoidance of exclusiveness and exaggeration, present us with a welcome contrast to the impression produced by most ancient systems of ethics—an impression which the reader has possibly already received from the Cynic system. But here again points of contact are not wanting between the two great ethical ramifications of Socratism. It is true that Antisthenes, in expressing his elevation above wants and all manner of dependence, his hatred towards the slavery of sensual pleasure, falls into the exaggeration, not to say unnaturalness, of professing an absolute and entire hostility to and contempt for all

pleasure; on the other hand, there is attributed to him a saying that pleasure is a good, but "only that pleasure which is followed by no repentance." To this Aristippus might very well have assented; only he would have formulated the proposition somewhat more precisely by asserting that pleasure is a good even in the excepted case, though it is then equalled or outweighed by the evil of repentance.

This hedonistic system, of which we have before us a somewhat meagre sketch, but one clearly describing many of its main features, has been hitherto treated by us as if it had been entirely the work of Aristippus. This, however, is more than we are able to affirm with absolute certainty. The elaborate discussion of first principles, clearly discernible even in the epitome, the unmistakable traces of a defensive attitude towards criticism, the cautious limitations, rare in pioneers, with which so many propositions are put forth,—all this suggests that there are other possibilities. Perhaps that excerpt may not have related to the founder of the school, but to his successors. Aristippus bequeathed his system to his daughter Arete, who again brought up her son to be a philosopher. We may pause here to note that this is the one instance in the whole history of philosophy in which the thread of tradition passed through the hand of a woman—a circumstance which may, perhaps, have contributed something to the fineness of the resulting product. Now, this "mother's pupil," Aristippus the younger, we find mentioned as the author of one of the propositions of the Cyrenaic ethics; and it would appear at least not impossible that the elaboration of the system may have been the work of Arete and her son. There is a piece of external evidence which favours this assumption, without, however, raising it to the rank of a certainty. In speaking of hedonistic ethics, Aristotle names, not Aristippus, but Eudoxus, who, in addition to rendering considerable services to mathematics and astronomy, constructed an ethical system closely akin to that of the Cyrenaics and based on the same fundamental phenomena. This ignoring of Aristippus will be easier to understand if we suppose that he left behind him, not a

completed system, but merely the suggestions of one. The argument, however, is inconclusive, for the Cyrenaic theory of knowledge, which Plato almost certainly has in his mind, and combats, in the "Theætetus," is also not deemed worthy of mention by Aristotle. It is not altogether beyond the bounds of possibility that personal dislike and a contempt for the "sophist" Aristippus may have been responsible for the silence of the Stagirite in both cases alike.

But, whether this conjecture be well founded or no, we must in any case use our utmost endeavour to keep the Cyrenaic doctrine of pleasure separate from the personal idiosyncrasies and the easy-going temperament which distinguished the founder of the school. How necessary it is to keep the two apart, appears with special clearness from the parallel case, already mentioned, of Eudoxus, who, equally with Aristippus, based his ethics on the pursuit of pleasure, but who in his own life, as Aristotle tells us, remained exceptionally aloof from all pleasure-seeking, and won many adherents to his doctrine through the respect which was paid him on this very account. We may also call to mind Jeremy Bentham, and his long life of cheerful labour, exclusively devoted to the furtherance of the general welfare. Lastly, we shall presently learn, from the history of the Cyrenaic school, that the view of life held by its members underwent manifold changes, that the two questions, "Is happiness attainable?" and "What does happiness consist in?" received widely different answers, while the basis of the doctrine remained unaltered in all essential points. The peculiar nature of this basis, its deduction of moral precepts from the well-being of the agent himself, is something common to all the ethical systems of antiquity; they all rest on a eudæmonistic, or, if the term is preferred, on an egoistic foundation. But whether the end and object of life is named *εὐδαιμονία*, or whether this somewhat vague composite notion is analyzed into its elements, the individual sensations of a pleasurable kind which together make up happiness, the principle is unaffected. Two questions, however, *are* of great importance, "What is the

practical content" of this or any other ethical system? and "How are the rules of conduct recognized by this system theoretically deduced from the fundamental principles?"

4. On the *content* of the Cyrenaic moral system there is a great dearth of accurate and detailed information; this very deficiency, however, supplemented as it is by one or two positive statements of fact, seems to indicate that the ideal of life cherished by these Socratics was not too widely divergent from the traditional one. Aristippus himself is reported to have said, in reply to an inquiry as to what philosophy was good for, "Chiefly to enable the philosopher, supposing all laws were abolished, to go on living as before." The historical value of such apophthegms is certainly trifling enough; still, a saying like the above, though we find it quoted with the primary object of showing the wise man's superiority to the compulsion of law, would hardly have been put in the mouth of the leading Cyrenaic if his doctrine had differed so much from accepted standards as did, for example, the system of the Cynics. This impression is strengthened by the fact that we nowhere meet with any hint of a breach with social tradition on the part of the Cyrenaics, and that even those members of the school who, like Theodorus, gave deep offence by their religious heresies, were on the best of understandings with the rulers of the day; whence we may gather that they did not offend against tradition by their mode of life as well.

That by "pleasure" the Cyrenaics did not mean the pleasures of sense exclusively, it is hardly necessary to state. They pointed out, among other things, that the same impressions received by the eye or ear produce different emotional effects according to the verdict passed on them by the intelligence: thus the cries of pain which distress us when they proceed from real sufferers affect us pleasurably when they occur in the artistic presentation of a tragedy on the stage. It is true that the school, or, more correctly, a part of it, assigned the greatest intensity to bodily feelings, in support of which view they appealed to the preponderating use of corporal punishment in education and in the administration of the criminal law. At this point we may consider

the process of development through which the ethical doctrines of the Cyrenaics passed—a development marked by the same twofold tendency towards refinement and towards pessimism which characterized the whole culture of the age (cf. p. 148). Four generations after Aristippus came Hegesias, who earned the appellation Πεισιθάνατος, "The Advocate of Death." In a work entitled "The Suicide," more correctly, "The Suicide by Starvation," as also in his lectures, he depicted the ills of life in so moving a fashion that the authorities of Alexandria felt themselves obliged to prohibit him from lecturing, in order to avert the danger arising from a propaganda of suicide. After this, we are not surprised to learn that he held happiness to be unattainable, and enjoined upon the wise man the task of avoiding evils rather than that of choosing goods. More astonishing, to those at least who have not learnt to see the deeper inward connexions between the different ramifications of Socratism, is the recurrence, among the Cyrenaïcs, of the Cynic doctrine of ἀδιαφορία. This indifference to all externals was justified by Hegesias, not in the same way as by the Cynics, but on the ground that nothing is in its own nature pleasurable or painful, that it is the newness or the rarity of a thing, on the one hand, or the fact of satiety with it, on the other, from which the pleasure or the pain arises. Such was his argument—an exaggerated expression of a correct perception that habit both increases the power of endurance and blunts the edge of feeling. In the Socratic doctrine of the involuntariness of all evil-doing, we may see the germ of that indulgence towards the erring which Hegesias inculcated with so great emphasis. Not to hate, but to instruct, was the burden of his exhortation, by which we are reminded of certain modern thinkers, such as Spinoza and Helvetius, who set out from the same premisses.

Among the contemporaries of Hegesias was Anniceris, in whose hands the Cyrenaic ethics attained its highest degree of refinement. Consonantly with the general character of the age, he was hardly more confident than Hegesias in the anticipation of positive happiness. But he

pronounced the wise man happy, even where the amount of pleasure falling to his personal share was very inconsiderable. He appears to have taught that the portion allotted to the individual was supplemented by those sympathetic emotions which are comprised under the names of friendship and gratitude, of piety and patriotism. It is true that even he rejected as psychologically inadmissible the formula which states that "the happiness of a friend is to be chosen for its own sake," just as in a later day Helvetius saw a psychological absurdity in the formula, "The good for the sake of the good." The happiness of others, to Anniceris' thinking, could never be an immediate object of feeling. But he did not, like most Hedonists, look for the origin of altruistic emotions, considered as secondary products, exclusively in utility. Friendship did not, for him, rest solely on benefits received; good will alone, apart from any active manifestation of it, was a quite sufficient basis. Above all, he did full justice to the highly important psychological truth that altruistic feelings, however generated, gradually acquire an independent force of their own, which they preserve even when—an exceptional case, he seems to have thought—they yield no balance of pleasure. He not only recognized this phenomenon as a fact, but he also justified the self-sacrifice which is its corollary, by affirming that the wise man, though holding firmly to pleasure as the supreme end, and setting his face against all diminution of it, will yet submit to such diminution in his own case for love of a friend. He extended the same recognition and approval to patriotic self-sacrifice; in neither case are we informed what were the arguments by which he defended his attitude.

We thus come to the highly important question of the bridge, which, in the Cyrenaic moral system, taken in the widest sense, led from the pursuit of happiness by the individual to the recognition of social obligations and the value of altruistic sentiment. That the system in question, in all its shades and varieties, did seek, and claim to have found, such a connecting link, there can be no manner of doubt. Although they detected a more than common

element of convention in current judgments on what is just and what unjust, what excellent and what reprehensible, although they expressly declared that right and wrong exist by custom and enactment, not by nature—a view which, like Hippias of Elis, they probably supported by an appeal to the disagreement on such matters of different ages and peoples—still, they held it for an established truth, as we have documentary evidence to show, that the wise man will avoid all that is unjust or wrong. In the absence of trustworthy and exhaustive records bearing on a particular point of history, analogy may be called in to help; and we may here call to mind the methods followed by the promulgators of cognate doctrines in other ages. The first and nearest of such connecting bridges is contained in the doctrine of "well-understood interest." This species of moral calculus, which preaches the avoidance of evil because of the injurious consequences to the agent himself, and supplies a like motive for well-doing, is by no means foreign to the "enlightenment" of modern times. If we desire acquaintance with this mode of thought in its quintessence, we may find an exposition of it, marked by more than common cogency and consistency of formulation, in a little book written by the Frenchman Volney, the deistic author of "The Ruins," namely, his "Catechism of Good Sense." Again, the English divine Paley interpolates the rewards and punishments of a future life between "private happiness" as "our motive," and "the will of God" as "our rule," thus extending worldly wisdom so as to bring the life beyond the grave within its scope. We have already alluded to the concluding speech in Plato's "Protagoras," and later on we shall have to consider it more minutely. It is not improbable that Plato wrote this with an eye to his fellow-pupil Aristippus; and the same may be said of that part of the "Phædo" in which virtue is treated as the result of prudence. Considerations of a similar nature occupy the central position in the moral system of Epicurus, who, however, while generally following the footprints of the Cyrenaics in ethical questions, was prevented by the strain of enthusiasm in his nature from finding exclusive satisfaction in their mode of deducing

obligations. This "regulation of egoism" was not limited to a commendation of well-doing by maxims, such as the proverbial "Honesty is the best policy," or, "If honesty had not existed, it would have had to be invented." At this stage of thought, that which mediates between individual self-love and the general weal is not so much the hortatory ethics of prudence as the power of law, supplementing and controlling that of public opinion. Both these factors appear in this connexion in the Cyrenaic teaching. Regard for "legal penalties" and for public opinion was held by them also to be a solid guarantee of good conduct. In the modern world, however, the chief trump held by the representatives of this stage of thought has been legislative reform. To give the law such a shape that individual interest may coincide with public interest, was the aim which Helvetius placed before himself, and which Bentham strove to realize with all the ingenuity at his command, and all the resources of his rich faculty of invention.

The second mode of connexion rests on an appreciation of altruistic feelings as an element in individual happiness. It culminates in the injunction to cultivate these feelings, to forget their assumed selfish origin, to choose and persevere in a life of entire devotion to the welfare of one's fellow-creatures as a means towards one's own happiness. As a typical expression of this view, we may quote the dictum of d'Alembert, "Enlightened self-love is the principle from which springs all self-sacrifice," or Holbach's definition (borrowed from Leibnitz) of virtue as the "art of making one's self happy by means of the happiness of others."

There is a third stage in this search for a connecting-link, in which it is deemed sufficient to recognize certain psychological facts. There are numerous cases where habit and the association of ideas convert what was originally a means to something else into an end in itself, as when, for example, the avaricious man begins to seek for its own sake the wealth which he first desired as an instrument, or when the drunkard, overmastered by his acquired craving, continues to indulge his vice after it has ceased to afford him

any pleasure. Of this nature, it is contended, are the social feelings. They are rooted and grounded in selfishness; they derive their force from praise and blame, from rewards and punishments, from regard to the good opinion and the good will of others, from solidarity of interests; gradually they acquire such strength that they are enabled to break loose from their roots, and exert an entirely independent influence over the soul. Traces both of the second and the third of these attempts to bridge the gap between Hedonism and social ethics may be discerned in Epicurus as well as in his predecessors, the Cyrenaics. To this category we may refer the details already reported concerning the ethical doctrine of Anniceris, as well as a proposition adduced in the excerpt of which we have made so much use, and not limited by that authority to one particular branch of the school: "The prosperity of our fatherland, equally with our own, is by itself enough to fill us with joy."

5. Even the above rapid survey is enough to satisfy us that Hedonism, or the theory which makes the pleasure and pain of the agent the sole original source of human actions, by no means involves denying the possibility of unselfish conduct, still more that it harbours no design of banishing unselfishness from the world. Many of the most resolute champions of this doctrine have been at the same time warm-hearted philanthropists; for example, Jeremy Bentham and other progress-enthusiasts of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. In their hands Hedonism was transformed into something often confused with it, but fundamentally different from it—Utilitarianism, or the system of ethics which has chosen for its guiding-star the general welfare, or "the greatest happiness of the greatest number." There are several factors common to ancient and modern eras of enlightenment, which have favoured the rise of this doctrine, and which have given it the same powerful impulse in the France of the eighteenth century as in the Greece of the fourth and third before Christ. The following may be taken to be the chief of them: a decay of the theological mode of thought in

educated circles; a faculty of observation enormously heightened by the rejection of every tendency to embellishment; a desire to place individual and corporate life on a strictly rational, even specially scientific, basis, and for this purpose to discard all fair seemings, and set out from the most unassailable and the most indubitable premisses, which latter, partly because they possess these very qualities, are apt to be at the same time the least subtle and the most obvious of their kind.

But our attention is due, not only to the inspiring principles, but also to the results of these tendencies of thought. Few will deny that some fragment of truth is present in each of them. But, taken together, do they contain the whole truth? We crave permission to state some of the reasons for which we hesitate to answer this question in the affirmative.

Hedonism, to our thinking, does not deserve the reproaches commonly levelled against it. But it hardly seems to give an adequate account of the facts it is intended to explain. Like many other ancient doctrines, it suffers from a defect which is the reverse side of a great merit: it strains after a higher degree of simplicity than the facts really exhibit. That supposed fundamental phenomenon, which it and the most illustrious of its adepts—Bentham—place at the root of all human endeavour, the desire for pleasure and the dread of pain, does in truth lie at a very considerable depth. But it is not the deepest to which the eye of the searcher can penetrate. Let us consider, for example, the human, or rather animal, craving for food. Is it true that man and beast desire food for the sake of the pleasure which accompanies the consuming it? If we examine the matter closely, it will appear, we think, that the case is otherwise. Our desire for food is something immediate, arising from the instinctive impulse towards the preservation and the enhancement of life; the pleasure is an accessory phenomenon, associated with this as with all other actions which promote life and its vigorous manifestation. Probably we shall not go far wrong if we interpret the facts somewhat as follows. The combination of matter which composes

an animal organism is subject to continual dissociation, which would be definitive if the loss were not repaired. This combination possesses at the same time a tendency to persist—a primordial fact which also appears in the reaction of the cell against injurious influences, and of which, as of some kindred facts in nature, no ulterior explanation seems attainable. We may mention the principle of heredity, which rests on the tendency of a process which has once begun to continue indefinitely, and the First Law of Motion, in which the same tendency is displayed in its most comprehensive application. Now, the processes that take place within the organism are, in part at least, attended by phenomena of a psychical order, particularly by emotional excitement; and it thus happens, by virtue of one of the least striking but perhaps most far-reaching of teleological adjustments, that the processes conducive to its preservation are felt as pleasurable, while those which are unfavourable are felt as painful. Pleasure and pain may thus pass for phenomena accompanying those primitive tendencies, but not for the tendencies themselves. In the above remarks, the germ of which is to be found in Aristotle, we have considered man as a part of nature, not as something existing by the side of nature. They will have been misunderstood, however, if it is supposed that man, endowed with reason and feeling, is to be taken as a mere slave and tool of his primary impulses. For by virtue of the images and ideas stored in his consciousness, or, more correctly, by virtue of the dispositions of will arising out of them, he is enabled to offer resistance to even the strongest of these impulses; he can resolve to die, indeed to die of hunger. But so long as, and in so far as, he has entered no veto against his natural instincts, they produce their effects in him immediately, without reference to possible pleasure, even when their satisfaction has pleasure for a consequence. In this, as in other cases, Socratism and the cognate modern schools of thought have overshot the mark in the rationalization of human life. It was a great thought, that the whole code of conduct ought to be based on the foundation of a single impulse. But this Monism or

Centralism, if we may be allowed the expression, cannot hold its ground, we think, against the richer variety, the Pluralism or Federalism of nature.

To a certain extent the case is similar with the second of the questions which present themselves when we set about criticizing the foundations of Hedonism—the question as to the origin of the sympathetic or social feelings. At first sight, indeed, it would appear as though the most recent advances of science had provided those old doctrines with new and powerful support. In defending the theory that the selfish feelings alone are original, and that the altruistic feelings are strictly dependent upon them, the Cyrenaics and Epicurus, as also their modern successors, the most consistent of whom were Hartley * and the older Mill,† attempted to show that habit and the association of ideas were the sole means by which this, so to speak, chemical transmutation of feelings and volitional impulses was effected. Those thinkers to whom the above-mentioned means seemed insufficient to work, in the course of an individual life, such a change as that from the crudest egoism to self-sacrificing devotion, would, at the present day, have had at their disposal another solution of the problem, and one less open to criticism. We refer, of course, to the theories of descent and evolution which belong to our times. Even though we carefully avoid all exaggeration and misuse of these theories, particularly of the most important of them, the doctrine of selection, they still do something to explain the advance of altruism. They make it easier than it formerly was to believe that in the course of untold generations those dispositions of mind which favour social or corporate life, more especially amenability to discipline, have gained greater and greater strength through the development of the organs of volitional inhibition. But if we entrust ourselves to the guidance of these theories, we are carried back to a far-distant past, at which the question as to the original or derived character of the social feelings becomes impossible for us to answer,

* Born 1704, died 1757. † Born 1775, died 1836.

or, if construed strictly, loses its meaning. For the same feelings may be both original and derived—original in man, derived in some one or other of his brutish ancestors. In respect of those modes of feeling which relate to the elementary social combinations, this possibility may at once be admitted to be a reality. The herd precedes the horde. Even in the former, the innate sympathetic feelings may already be observed exerting a widely extended influence. The same may be said of all that concerns the preservation of the species. The case is here much the same as with the feelings and adjustments which relate to the preservation of the individual life. The "chemistry of feelings" here entirely refuses the services which it renders in not a few other cases, including some taken from the emotional life of animals. The dog which has learnt "from love to fear, from fear to love" his master, may have been educated, by the agency of associations connected equally with benefits received and with punishments suffered, up to the point of self-sacrifice. But we must regard in a very different light that instinct, which is implanted in so many animals, of caring for their offspring, even when yet unborn, with a devotion which pain cannot quench. Take the case of the salmon, for example, which pines away almost to a skeleton in the course of the long voyage from the sea to the river waters suited for spawning.

6. In the theory of knowledge, the analytic intellect of the Cyrenaics penetrated to still greater depths than in ethics. We cannot take account of their work in this field without making the reader to some extent a partner in our investigation. The regrettable loss of all the works of this school, the meagreness and the one-sidedness of the notices relating to them, almost all of which are of a polemical character, compel us to linger for some time over the subject, and to give it a detailed consideration, the length of which will, we hope, be rewarded by its fruits.

The Cyrenaic theory of knowledge was compressed into a formula which occurs in the same form in different and independent accounts, and therefore must certainly have been taken from the original documents. It runs as

follows: "Our modes of being affected (Greek πάθη) are alone knowable." For the explanation of this proposition. our authorities appeal to the most diverse instances of sense-perception. They allege—in the spirit, partly perhaps in the very words, of the Cyrenaics—that we do not know that honey is sweet, that chalk is white, that fire burns, or that the knife-blade cuts: all that we can report is our own states of feeling; we have a sensation of sweetness, we feel ourselves burnt or cut, and so on. The first impression received by the attentive reader of this book may possibly be that in these utterances we are again confronted by the Leucippic-Democritean doctrine touching the subjective nature of most sensations ("According to convention, there are a sweet and a bitter, a hot and a cold," and so on. Cf. Vol. I. p. 320). But this impression will not bear examination. For there is no repetition of what formed the counterpart of that declaration concerning the subjective or secondary properties of things, namely, a proclamation of atoms and the void as strictly objective realities. Not only so, but nothing else is introduced as a strictly objective existence to take the place of atoms and the void. We must consider, too, that our records, inadequate as they are, present us, in their central features at any rate, with the testimony of competent and well-informed students of the earlier philosophers; and these would not have omitted to mention the identity or approximate identity of two doctrines. Still, the present is not an unsuitable occasion to allude to the theory of Leucippus, if only as the starting-point, and almost indispensable premiss of the theory now engaging our attention. In the latter we have, without any doubt, a continuation and expansion of the earlier attempt, related to it as the theories of Berkeley or Hume are to those of Hobbes or Locke.

Expositions in some detail of this theory of knowledge occur in three different quarters. There are two late philosophical authors, namely, the empiric physician, Sextus (about 200 A.D.), and a Peripatetic, or adherent of the Aristotelian school, named Aristocles, who came about a generation earlier, and of whom the ecclesiastical historian

Eusebius has preserved considerable fragments in his "Præparatio Evangelica." Lastly there is Plato. This reversal of the natural order in which the profound philosopher, the contemporary of Aristippus, is made to yield precedence to late authors who were immeasurably inferior to him in every respect, is based upon the following reason. Those two later authorities treat expressly and deliberately of Aristippus and his school; Plato gives us, in a section of the "Theætetus," what purports to be a secret doctrine of the sophist Protagoras, but really belongs, as we believe, along with Friedrich Schleiermacher and several others, to Aristippus. This conjecture—for conjecture it is, though anything but a random or reckless one—rests entirely on the agreement between Plato's exposition and the above-mentioned accounts, which, nevertheless, are thereby supplemented to a not inconsiderable degree, and, so to speak, illuminated from within.

Aristocles, in truth, gives us little more than the formula quoted above, to which he subjoins a lengthy polemic, betraying his total inability to appreciate his opponent's standpoint. Sextus is an adherent and advocate of sceptic principles. As such he is at pains, as we have already remarked *à propos* of Democritus (Vol. I. p. 359), to make the representatives of other schools into allies of scepticism. It is thus not surprising that he clothes his account of the Cyrenaic theory of knowledge in the language of his own school, and that he gives the sceptical or negative side of that theory the predominance. But that which more particularly moves our astonishment in this short account of the scepticism of the Cyrenaics, as in the parallel account given by Plutarch, is the lavish use of words expressing dogmatic assurance, such as "true," "incontrovertible," "unshakable," "infallible," "reliable," "sound." How is this contradiction to be explained? For this purpose it seems necessary to penetrate more deeply into the mind of these philosophers and the guiding principles of their thought. What at first may here seem hypothetical, will, we hope, gradually improve its claim to be fact in the course of the investigation.

The distinction between primary and secondary qualities, the great achievement, rich in consequences, of Leucippus, had drawn the attention of thinkers to the subjective element in sense-perception generally. This exaltation of the subject, this insistence on his cardinal significance for the genesis of sensation, natural and obvious as it seems, was a comparatively late development; when, however, it had once appeared, its influence on the mind of inquirers could not but gain in strength as it became more and more familiar to them. The question was bound to be raised whether those perceptions to which absolutely objective validity was still conceded, were in reality fully entitled to the distinction. For example, the perception of colour was held to be subjectively conditioned, but not that of forms. This violent separation of what was so closely related could not be maintained intact when once attention had been drawn to a number of illusions to which the eye is subject even outside the field of colour-perception. New difficulties were raised by the staff which appears broken when dipped in water, by the different apparent magnitudes of one and the same object as viewed by the two eyes, by the double vision which may be the result either of a pathological condition or of sideward pressure upon one eye. The sense of touch itself, which passed for the type of true objectivity, was found, on closer observation, to labour under grave deficiencies. Thus the fact that, when two fingers are crossed, a single pellet may be felt as two, supplied much matter for thought. (A few, but not all, of these illusions are mentioned in the account given by Sextus; others are referred to in the section of Aristotle's Metaphysics which deals with the relativistic schools of thought.) Some, no doubt, were satisfied with the reflexion that the message of the one sense, or of the one organ, may be corrected by that of another, just as the normal condition corrects the testimony of the abnormal one. But what guarantee have we—so might the doubters answer—that equally grave deceptions do not occur in other cases, where no correction is attainable? And, apart from that, had not Democritus already pointed out that it is not the

number, not the majority or minority, whether of persons or of conditions, that can decide between truth and falsehood (cf. Vol. I. p. 360)? Here we call to mind the violent attacks of the Eleatics on the testimony of the senses in general. This tendency of thought to be hostile to sense was necessarily reinforced by the growth of reflexion, and especially by the placing of such observations as we have just mentioned in the forefront of discussion. Nor was Eleaticism by any means dead; it lived on in the school of those Socratics whose home was at Megara, and whom we took leave to call "Neo-Eleatics," as being the heirs of Zeno and his predecessors. There can be no doubt that the old cry, "The senses are liars; do not believe them! Truth dwells outside and above the world of sense," was now raised more loudly than before. It woke the strongest echo in the mind of Plato. But the opponents of the Eleatics—Protagoras, for example—had successors as well, and we ask with what weapons could the old conflict be continued? The proposition, "All that is perceived is real" had from the first a subjective tinge, which appears in the reference to "man" as the "measure of all things," but which finds its clearest expression in the treatise "On the Art." This sophist's discourse, filled with the spirit of Protagoras, contains a passage which runs as follows: "If the Non-Existent can be seen like the Existent, I do not understand how any one can call it non-existent, when the eyes can see it and the mind recognize it as existent" (cf. Vol. I. p. 454). That which in an earlier generation had been a casual glimpse, a fleeting inspiration, now became the central stronghold for the defence of the witness of the senses. Its champions abandon, so to speak, their advanced posts and outworks to the enemy, and retire to the inmost parts of the fortress, the sensations themselves. These are no longer held as the pledges and guarantees of something external; while the adversary receives the most sweeping concessions, his most effective weapon of attack is wrested from his hands. However freely we admit that sensation can bring no valid testimony to the nature, or even the existence, of external objects,

the sensation itself remains undeniable; it possesses unconditional validity or truth in itself, and, in combination with the other processes of consciousness, makes up a sum of knowledge which is perfectly adequate for all human purposes.

7. He who encounters for the first time this renunciation of belief in an external world may be excused if he imagines himself in a madhouse. "If you believe in the truth of this doctrine of yours"—it was in such terms as these that Bishop Berkeley and his adherents were apostrophized—"you may just as well run your head against a lamp-post, for the non-existent post cannot possibly hurt your equally non-existent head." To which the reply was regularly returned, "We do not deny the sensation of resistance, nor any of the other sensations of which is composed the image or idea of a post, of a head, and of the whole external world; that which we deny, or that, at least, of which we know nothing"—as one section of the school affirms—"is that mysterious something assumed by you to lie behind those phenomena which are present to our as to every other similar consciousness, and which are bound together by unalterable laws of sequence and coexistence." What "we call the idea of a tree, the idea of a stone, the idea of a horse, the idea of a man"—so we are told by a modern advocate of this school of thought, the older Mill, in his "Analysis of the Phenomena of the Human Mind"—are the ideas of a certain number of sensations, received together so frequently that they coalesce as it were, and are spoken of under the idea of "unity." Similarly, we read in Plato's "Theætetus:" "To such a group [of sensations] is assigned the name of man, of stone, of beast, and of every other thing." Plato is here dealing with thinkers on whose subtlety he lays particular emphasis, whom he places in the sharpest contrast with the materialists, who believe in nothing but what they can grasp in their hands. He says of them, further, that they resolve everything into processes and events, completely banishing the concept of Being. He represents them, by the aid of that transparent fiction of a secret doctrine of Protagoras,

as the successors of the great sophist; and, lastly, he describes for us a theory of sensation which is peculiar to them, one to which we shall presently have to pay some attention. The reader will probably be satisfied that the only contemporaries of Plato to whom this picture could apply were those who maintained that "modes of being affected are alone knowable," that the "external thing" supposed to underlie a group of such modes was "possibly existent," but, in any case, "inaccessible to us" (Sextus). Again, we must express regret for the scantiness of our information. We do not know how these earliest representatives of the school of thought now called phenomenalistic, settled accounts with traditional views. Did they undertake to explain the origin of the latter? Did they, like an English psychologist and a German-Austrian physicist of our own day, point to the psychical processes in virtue of which an aggregate of possibilities of sensation "appears to acquire a permanent existence which our sensations themselves do not possess, and consequently a greater reality than belongs to our sensations"? Or did they appeal to the fact that "the colours, sounds, odours of bodies are fleeting," while the "tangible," exempt in the main from temporal and individual change, remains as a "persistent kernel," appearing as the background, substratum, or "vehicle of the fleeting qualities attached to it," and retained as such, by force of mental habit, even when "the conviction has gained ground, that sight, hearing, *and touch* are intimately related to each other?" or lastly, did they contemplate the possibility that the conception of material substance arises from the confluence of those two streams of thought? These are questions which we cannot answer. But we should not be in the least surprised to learn that they never advanced beyond the rudiments of the problem, although they can hardly have neglected all criticism of the concept of Being.

The account which Plato gives of their theory of sensation must also be taken as authentic only in essentials. Many a detail in the picture may well be due to that creative intellect which was hardly ever satisfied with the bare

reproduction of other men's opinions. For this reason we shall only advert to the main features of that theory. According to it, two elements, an active and a passive, come into play in the production of every sensation. This co-operation is designated as movement, and connected, in jest or earnest, with the Heraclitean doctrine of perpetual flux. From the meeting of two such elements, which only by meeting acquire their characters of active and passive, sensation and the object of sensation take their rise simultaneously—colours along with visual sensations, sounds along with auditory sensations, and so forth. It is denied that a previously existing hard, soft, warm, cold, or white thing is perceived; all this enters upon existence simultaneously with the perception. But how are we to conceive of this process which creates, at one and the same time, the subjective sensation and the objective quality, if not the object possessing the quality? Plato, as we have remarked, terms the process movement, and clearly attributes to it a spatial character. What we have called the elements concerned in the movement, Plato leaves somewhat indefinite, and the consequence is a certain regrettable want of clearness, which may or may not have been intended. In the reasoning on which the doctrine is founded there is no mention of the material or corporeal; the emphatically repeated denial of all absolute existence, the "activities, processess, and all the invisible," which are placed in such strong contrast with tangible things, lead us far away from the material world. Or rather, they would take us entirely out of it, were it not for the fact that the substitutes for the strict concept of matter which were used by many ancient thinkers, Plato and Aristotle among them, laboured under a remarkable degree of haziness. Thus the possibility is not entirely excluded that, in the original exposition at least, some species of matter, devoid of form and qualities, was designated as the subject of that movement. But we must not lose sight of yet another possibility, namely, that Aristippus himself may have had in view a purely material process. This last and more natural supposition gave rise to the reproach, urged against the Cyrenaics, of moving in

a circle, by resolving the corporeal into sensations, and then deducing sensation from the corporeal. The justice of this reproach is to say the least, doubtful. For in no case can it be contended that the phenomenalist, merely as such, is debarred from studying the physiology of the senses or natural science in general. He will, of course, begin by declaring that bodies or material substances are for him nothing but complexes of permanent possibilities of sensation, or else similar abstractions resting in the last resort on sensations. But he is none the less at liberty to treat of the bodily conditions of each special sensation, and of the material conditions of any other process he may choose to consider. It is possible to contest the admissibility of his analysis, but not the legitimacy of this application of it. The procedure of the Cyrenaics may quite possibly have resembled that which we have just described. This would accord with the circumstance that they were accused of having reintroduced into their system at a later stage the physics and logic which they began by banishing from it. For the crown of their doctrinal edifice (its fourth and fifth parts) is stated to have been concerned with "causes" (physics), and "grounds of proof" (logic).

8. What more especially was the character of this logic of theirs, is a question to which we should be glad to be able to give an answer. There is an entire lack of positive statements on the subject. Yet it might have been conjectured *à priori* that in ancient times, as in modern, a phenomenalistic theory of knowledge and a hedonistic-utilitarian system of ethics were accompanied by an empirical and inductive tendency in logic. That such a logic did exist in the schools of the later Epicureans, we learnt, more than thirty years ago, from a work of Philodemus, which had lain concealed by the ashes of Herculaneum. When we first attempted the reconstruction of that mutilated treatise, we were able to point to traces, hitherto unobserved, of similar doctrines in the schools of the Sceptics and of the Empiric physicians. What was the common root? Light has been thrown on this question by Ernst Laas, who drew attention to a pregnant reference to this

subject, which had previously been overlooked, in Plato's "Republic." This passage deals with the preservation in the memory of past events, with the careful consideration of what happened first, what afterwards, what at the same time, and with the deduction, from such sources, of the safest possible forecast of the future. The language employed, for all its picturesqueness, strongly reminds us of the expressions used by more recent authors well acquainted with the inductive logic of later antiquity. We shall hardly go wrong if we connect this passage, not, as was done by another investigator, with Protagoras, but with Plato's contemporary, Aristippus. The conclusion which we draw from all our data taken together is that Aristippus laid the foundations for a system of logic which should be nothing else than a body of rules for ascertaining the sequences and the coexistences of phenomena. The Cyrenaic was, no doubt, prepared for weighty objections against his views, and such were probably raised in abundance by his contentious and inquisitive opponents. "You do not believe in the reality of external things"—so may his critics well have exclaimed—"at least you deny that they can be known; where, then, do you leave room, we do not say for science, but the most elementary foresight? What is the foundation of the commonest empirical truths which no one denies, not even yourself? How can you infer to-morrow from to-day? Whence do you learn that fire burns, that water quenches thirst, that men are mortal, that there is any permanence in those connexions and co-ordinations on which the whole conduct of life depends, as well as the special methods and processes of the artist, the mechanic, the physician, the pilot, the farmer, and the rest?" We shall not be guilty of any great recklessness in conjecture if we assume that the Cyrenaics felt themselves compelled to return some answer to these questions, and not admit, if only by silence, that in renouncing all cognizable objects they also renounced all knowledge and all regulation of conduct in accordance with knowledge. And the very answer which their epistemological assumptions allowed them to give is contained in that allusion of Plato to which we

have referred. There is in that passage no mention of objects, but only of events and happenings; and similarly it is quite possible that the inductive logic alluded to above may have grown out of a mode of apprehending the world which neither sought nor found behind things or existences anything else than complexes of phenomena, bound together by fixed laws. There is thus something more than a small probability that the earliest emergence of a radical criticism of knowledge was accompanied by the first formulation of that canon of knowledge which not only can be associated with such criticism, but has once more been so associated in our own century, that is to say, the rules governing the ascertainment of purely phenomenal successions and coexistences.

But it is time to return from this digression, to leave the Cyrenaic treatment of the chief problem of knowledge, known to us as it is only in its main features, for a subject on which all doubt may be said to be excluded—the Cyrenaïc doctrine of sensation, borrowed by them from Protagoras, but certainly further elaborated by Aristippus. That, properly speaking, there are no illusions of the senses, that, on the contrary, every sensation is the natural and necessary result of the factors which produce it, is a highly important truth which Plato, in the "Theætetus," proclaims with all the clearness that can be desired, in close connexion with undoubted Cyrenaic doctrines. It is not the majority or the minority of the subjects who feel in this or that manner, it is not the regularly predominating or the casually occurring state of the individual percipient that can establish a fundamental distinction between sensations; although, as we may add, the conclusions which we draw from the two classes of sensation may be of very different values for the ordering of life. That the authors of this theory were far in advance of their century is clear from the fact that some of the most eminent of our own contemporaries have not thought it superfluous to proclaim and insist upon those same truths. In 1867 Hermann Helmholtz wrote as follows:—

"A red-blind person sees cinnabar as black or as a dark-yellowish grey, and that is the proper reaction for his peculiarly

constituted eye. He only needs to know that his eye *is* different from those of other men. In itself, the one sensation is no truer and no falser than the other ['My sensation is true for me,' as we read in the 'Theætetus'], even though those who see red have the great majority on their side. The red colour of cinnabar only exists at all in so far as there are eyes made like those of the majority of mankind. Cinnabar has exactly the same title to the property of being black, that is, to the red-blind."

And again: "A sweet thing which is sweet *for no one* is an absurdity." In the following year another philosophical physicist, to whom we have already alluded, explained his views on the same question in these words—

"The expression, 'sense-illusion,' proves that we are not yet fully conscious, or at least have not yet deemed it necessary to incorporate the fact into our ordinary language, *that the senses represent things neither wrongly nor correctly.* All that can be truly said of the sense-organs is that *under different circumstances they produce different sensations and perceptions.* . . . And it is usual to call the unusual effects deceptions, or illusions."

We have still to consider a negative circumstance of some importance. The problems of change, of inherence, of predication, which played so great a part in the investigations of the Megarians, the Cynics, and even of Plato, are entirely absent from all reports of the teaching of the Cyrenaics. Nor should we be surprised at this, for all these riddles are offshoots of the concept of Being, which the authors of the theory of sensation expounded in the "Theætetus" endeavoured, as Plato expressly informs us, to abolish altogether. The desire to be rid of the difficulties which attend this concept was, we may be sure, a considerable factor in the thought of the earlier as of the later phenomenalists. There is an entire lack of evidence to show how far their criticism of the concept of Being took a polemical turn, directed against members of other Socratic schools. It is possible that this very subject had its part in the controversies which raged between Aristippus and Antisthenes, and again between Theodorus, a late member of the African school, and Stilpo the Megarian.

9. The discord of the Socratics was less persistent in the field of ethics than in that of metaphysics. We find them, as ethical teachers, continually reproducing the features of their common ancestor. We notice what may almost be called a reversion to an original type, a force working to overcome the divergences of special developments, or at least to bring them nearer together. It is precisely this fact of which we are reminded by a name we have just mentioned—that of Theodorus. In the line of philosophical descent he was a great-grandchild of Aristippus, but in his manner of life, as well as in his teaching, he was almost as much a Cynic as a Cyrenaic. In early life he was driven from his home by party conflicts; he worked as a teacher at Athens and Corinth, as a statesman in the court of Ptolemy I., and he was sent on a diplomatic mission to Lysimachus. Finally he returned to his native city, where he assisted the Egyptian governor Magas, by whom he was held "in high honour," and there he died. He was thus a philosopher of the world and the court, though he was anything but a courtier. On the contrary, the strong self-assurance, the frank fearlessness of his demeanour towards the great, was the most striking feature in his character, and reminded men of Diogenes and his successors. In his cosmopolitanism, again, and in his disparagement of state-citizenship, he was equally Cynic and Cyrenaic; while the Cynic element predominated in his contempt for friendship, which, as he thought, is unnecessary to the self-sufficing wise man, while it is wholly foreign to the bad, whose inclinations rarely survive the advantages flowing from them.

The judgments which Theodorus passed on the figures of the popular religion were at least as bold as, if not bolder than, those of some among his Socratic contemporaries (especially Stilpo and Menedemus, see p. 207). Whether his appellation of "Atheist" was fully deserved or no, we cannot tell. The greater number of our authorities attribute atheistic sentiments to him; others aver that he only scourged the gods of mythology; others, again, state that it was from the important critical labours of Theodorus

that Epicurus derived his own (by no means atheistic) teaching on religious subjects. Possibly we have here some reason to conjecture that Theodorus included in his attack the belief in Providence and in special divine interventions. This would certainly have been quite enough to raise the prospect of an accusation before the Areopagus, from which he was protected by Demetrius of Phalerum, who conducted the administration of Athens between 317–6 and 307–6. It was enough, too, to cause him to be ranged among the deniers of the Deity by the side of Diagoras and Prodicus (cf. Vol. I. pp. 408, 430), and to prompt a late ecclesiastical writer to say of him that "he denied the Deity, and *therefore* incited mankind to perjury, theft, and violence."

The truth is that his ethics showed some touch of that more spiritual quality we have already noticed in Hegesias and Anniceris. For him, it is plain, the word "pleasure" was too thickly beset with misleading associations to be used as a name for that happiness or well-being which all the Socratics alike regarded as the end of life. In its place he employed an expression drawn rather from the emotional than the sensual sphere—"joy," or "cheerfulness," the opposite of which was "sorrow," or "melancholy." The one true good (that is, the one effective means of attaining that end) was wisdom or justice, which he seems to have regarded as essentially identical, while the opposites of these were the only true evil. Pleasure and pain, both understood in the narrower sense, as the Greek word for the second of them, πόνος, shows clearly enough, take their stand among the "middle" things, or things indifferent in themselves—the ἀδιάφορα, to use the language of the Cynics and Stoics. This doctrine, which we only know in outline, is, in any case, chargeable with lack of due regard to the external conditions of existence, and with the same strain of exaggeration which marks the two schools of thought just mentioned. It is not, however, easy to understand how the same compiler to whom we owe the above curt but valuable notices was able to add, almost in a breath, that "in certain circumstances" the wise man, as conceived by Theodorus, would steal, or commit sacrilege and other

crimes. A reporter without malice would certainly not have omitted to give us some more exact account of those remarkable "circumstances" which would have sufficed temporarily to dethrone the supreme good, justice.

Unless we suppose this statement to be a clumsy invention, there seem to us to be only two possibilities. It may have been that in some piece of dialectic our Cyrenaic used names generally applied to morally reprehensible actions, to denote quite other and innocent ones, much as we speak of "justifiable homicide," or regard other acts as sometimes justified by necessity. We may compare the reasonings of Socrates on the abstraction of arms to prevent suicide, on various deceptions practised for the sake of saving life, and on similar subjects (see p. 56). Or it may be that he was treating of "academic instances" of quite exceptional character in the spirit of that imaginative casuistry which robs ordinary moral standards of their applicability—casuistry such as we shall encounter in the case of the Stoics, *e.g.* the necessity of incest, if the preservation of the human race depended on it. It is different with certain utterances, advocating Cynic freedom in sexual matters, which are ascribed to Theodorus, himself half a Cynic, and which may very well be authentic.

If Theodorus was half a Cynic, his pupil Bion was three-quarters of one. He was born at Borysthenis, on the Dnieper, attended the philosophic schools of the motherland, and learnt not only from the Cynics, but from Theodorus, Crates the Academic, and Theophrastus the Peripatetic. He became a travelling teacher, but while he adopted the Cynic dress, he broke with the Cynic custom by receiving payment for his instruction. He was, moreover, an uncommonly prolific author, both in prose and verse. Wit and intellect he possessed in remarkably high degree, and the shafts of his satire flew indiscriminately in all directions. In two lines of burlesque verse—all that remains to us of his poetry—he tears the venerable Archytas to pieces; and this, in our eyes, is more damaging to him than all the evil talk which went the rounds concerning him, and which Erwin Rohde long ago pronounced with perfect justice to

be nothing but venomous slander. Vengeance was hereby taken for his violent attacks as well on the popular religion as on philosophers of every shade. The part which he played reminds us sometimes of Voltaire, whom he further resembles in the circumstance that a deathbed conversion was invented for him. Some knowledge of Bion's literary manner may be gained from the imitations of Teles (cf. p. 158), particularly from the highly ingenious dialogue between "Poverty" and the "Circumstances of Life." As for the content of his teaching, it may be termed a softened Cynicism which has taken over from Hedonism the idea, foreign to itself, of adaptation to circumstances, and which preaches not so much the rejection of pleasure as contentment with such pleasure as may be attainable in each given case.

The following seems to be the net result of those adaptations, transformations, and fusions which we have described in this and the preceding chapters. The smaller twigs on the tree of Socratism gradually wither; the Megarian and the Elian-Eretrian schools die out. Cynicism maintains its existence in its stricter form as a sect; but whatever it possesses of the scientific spirit and method is transferred to a new and less crude movement—that of the Stoa. The latter is confronted by Epicureanism, an outgrowth of Hedonism; but the two are inwardly in closer connexion than the fierceness of their brother's battle would lead us to conjecture. For Epicurus and Zeno are now nearer together than, say, Aristippus and Antisthenes had been. Socratism thus advances in a double stream, allying itself, on the Cynic side, with the Heraclitean physics, and, on the Cyrenaic side, with that of Democritus. So developed, and with these additions, the teaching of Socrates becomes the religion, not of the masses in general, but of the masses of the educated, and continues to be so for a series of centuries. The process of transformation was accomplished, as is plain, with an astonishing degree of regularity. In the chain, forged chiefly out of ethical material, there occur, in the one case as in the other, links of natural philosophy; and the whole fabric constitutes

a system capable of satisfying the religious, moral, and scientific needs of myriads of men. Those who performed the work of carrying on and extending the tradition, were men of eminent intellect, but yet not the most eminent of all. Certain substances are termed conductors of heat or of electricity, and in the same way minds of a certain type may be called conductors of thought. Such minds are to be distinguished from those which open up fresh paths. Not that we accept as true the popular theory of genius. No one, we think, is entirely independent of his predecessors. No one can conjure up, as if out of nothing, a purely novel fabric, unexampled in all its parts. The true distinction seems to be contained in the following considerations.

An intellect of the first order, having found and selected the elements of a world-theory, will combine and develop them in such manner as may best accord with its own powerful and strongly marked individuality, and, for this very reason, there will be small prospect of gaining the adherence, within a short interval, of any very extensive section of society. At the same time, such an intellect, out of the abundance of its wealth, will exert an influence upon many later generations, with which it will continually present new points of contact, and thus upon the intellectual life of mankind at large. Of such a type was the great man we now have to study. He, too, imparted fresh life to Socratism by an infusion of foreign elements, notably Pythagoreanism, but the influence of the new product remained, in the first instance, limited to much narrower circles. The comprehensive developments, the intellectual phenomena on the vast scale, to which we have just referred, stand in immediate connexion with the Cynic and Cyrenaic Socratism out of which they arose. The next two books of this work will hardly do much towards making their evolution more intelligible. Still, we shall have little cause to repent having spent a very considerable time on Plato, his pupil Aristotle, and the circle of their disciples.

BOOK V.

PLATO.

Διὰ τὸ ἀπολειφθῆναι τοῦ ἀρίστου φύλακος; Τίνος; ἦ δ' ὃς ὁ Ἀδείμαντος. Λόγου, ἦν δ' ἐγώ, μουσικῇ κεκραμένου, ὃς μόνος ἐγγενόμενος σωτὴρ ἀρετῆς διὰ βίου ἐνοικεῖ τῷ ἔχοντι.—PLATO, "Republic," viii. 549 B.

CHAPTER I.

PLATO'S YEARS OF STUDY AND TRAVEL.

1. AN eminent contemporary has propounded a peculiar definition of a "great man." According to him, a great man is several men in one. There is no genius to whom this saying applies better than it does to Plato. Highly as we admire the force of his talent and the magnitude of his achievements, still greater astonishment is roused by their multiplicity. The poet in him was at least on an equal footing with the thinker. And in the thinker the most contradictory excellences balance each other. On the one hand, there is the power of constructing a massive edifice of thought; on the other is the piercing subtlety by which that edifice is again and again undermined, by which the products of his own, as well as of other men's thought, are subjected to an unwearied scrutiny, carried into the minutest detail. Sceptic and mystic by turns, at once a constructive and an analytical genius, Plato exhibited the many-sided wealth of his endowment not only in the long series of his writings: in the school which he founded, we see, in the course of the ages, first one then the other of these two tendencies coming into prominence; they relieve each other alternately for almost a thousand years.

The mighty influences, of many different kinds, that have radiated from this extraordinary personality, are not yet extinguished or attenuated by time. But lately Immanuel Kant has been called a Platonist by a writer who wished to do him honour. One half of the philosophic world still holds fast to Plato's view of the

supersensual, while the other and less ambitious half contemplates with admiration his methods of conceptual analysis. Adventurous reformers, full of plans for the renovation of the social order, hail the "Republic" as an early and brilliant model of their labours; while those who cling stubbornly to inherited forms of faith render ardent homage to the creator of the "Phædo." The sober champions of utility and severe rationalism claim Plato for their intellectual ancestor; but the dreamy mysticism of East and West derives its pedigree from the same source. It grew from the latest branch of his school—Neo-Platonism—and traces of the relationship are still to be detected by the eye of the expert even in that symbolism which finds its material expression in the dances of ecstatic dervishes.

According to the most trustworthy accounts, Plato was born in the spring of the year 427 B.C., in the island of Ægina, situated not far from Athens, where his father, Ariston, had settled temporarily. His father claimed descent from Codrus, the last King of Athens. His mother, Perictione, also belonged to a highly esteemed family; Solon, who was connected with it, had sung its praises in verse, as also had Anacreon and other poets. Plato, who only mentions himself three times in his dialogues, and that casually, dwells with affectionate pride on these family memories. And in his works he has raised more than one monument to several of his kinsmen: to the brothers Glaucon and Adeimantus; to his half-brother Antiphon; to his maternal uncle Charmides; above all, to his mother's cousin Critias. Without any doubt his rich mental endowment was an inheritance from his mother's family. We have already, in studying the beginnings of social science, met with the name of Critias (Vol. I. p. 389, *seq.*). He worked several veins of literature, both prose and verse; some, indeed, he may be said to have opened up for the first time—descriptions of constitutions, of national customs, and (if we except the poet Semonides) of types of character. He grew up in the school of Enlightenment, and in his book-drama "Sisyphus" (cf. Vol. I. p. 389) he

spoke of faith in the gods as an invention of prudent men, concerned for the welfare of society. In that work he adopted an attitude of hostility to all forms of theology, even those possessed of metaphysical refinements. This fact is in agreement with the little that we know of his materialistic psychology and his theory of knowledge—subjects which he treated in books entitled "Aphorisms" and "Conversations." Posterity, however, has not preserved the memory of Critias the poet or Critias the thinker so much as of Critias the statesman. The part he played in the Athenian faction-fights which marked the close of the fifth century, his position at the head of the so-called Thirty Tyrants, have made him one of the best-hated characters in Greek history. And there can be no doubt that, as champion of the aristocracy, he shrank from no extremity of violence; that those were grievous political sins which he expiated with his life at the end of the civil war (403). But we have no ground whatever for supposing him to have been under the sway of ignoble motives. The very manner in which Aristotle (while spreading a veil, out of regard for Plato, over his political actions) couples his personality with that of Achilles, shows clearly that he had been considerably impressed by it. When we are told that Critias, the champion of the aristocracy, attempted, when an exile in Thessaly, to excite the tributary peasants against their masters (about 406), we may at first gather the impression that he was lacking in character. But the story is not fully authenticated, to begin with, and, even if it were, it would not be sufficient foundation for the above unfavourable judgment. For a man who was opposed to the system by which the city bourgeoisie and proletariate reigned supreme on the Pnyx, might very well be in favour of a free peasant class. Our interest, however, is confined to two points—the fact that a man remarkable for his great abilities and strong passions belonged to the number of Plato's near relations, and the influence which, to quote Niebuhr, "so intellectual a man, so gifted with the power to charm and to subdue . . . must have exercised over his great-nephew. Before his banishment, his position was perfectly justifiable,

as much so as that of any one else who ever opposed an administration full of abuses; when he went into exile, Plato was still very young, and did not see him again till he returned as one of the Tyrants." However greatly the young Plato may have abhorred the excesses of that reign of terror, he doubtless considered it the product of an imperious necessity. His love and admiration for Critias continued undiminished, and, together with his grief for his uncle Charmides, who also fell in that struggle, may have contributed to estrange him from Athens and its democratic constitution. That these sentiments persisted unchanged for a long course of years was a result which the leaders of the people, on its restoration to power, did their best to effect. Did not one of them, Anytus, act as the chief accuser of Socrates?

Critias and Charmides had also sought the company of Socrates in days gone by, and probably it was through the intermediary of the latter that Plato, as a youth of twenty, had been brought under the spell of the great conversational wizard. Before that he had studied music under Dracon, who had learnt from Damon, a man of high intellectual gifts and a friend of Pericles; he had then occupied himself with painting and poetry. He now renounced these favourite tastes, or rather, he enlisted them almost entirely in the service of philosophy. If, as the legend goes, he devoted a complete tragedy to the flames at that time, it would seem that the poetic, descriptive, and dramatic wealth of his dialogues rose in full vigour from the ashes.

Socrates, however, was not the only thinker with whom Plato consorted familiarly. He had already made the acquaintance of Cratylus, whose name he immortalized in one of his dialogues. This man was a belated Heraclitean, related to the sage of Ephesus much as the Neo-Hegelians are to Hegel. He grotesquely exaggerated the teaching of the master. The latter had given concrete expression to his view of the continued movement and change of all things in the saying that it is impossible to step into the same river twice. But this was not enough to satisfy Cratylus. For the river, according to him, becomes a new

one during the short space of time occupied in entering it. Finally, as Aristotle tells us, this extreme Neo-Heraclitean rejected the use of language, the definiteness of which he conceived to be in contradiction with the indefiniteness of fleeting existence, and suggested pointing with the finger as a substitute. In some of the works of his mature age, Plato describes, with delightful humour, that caricature of a doctrine and its champions, the circle of his own teacher. To them the world appeared as though afflicted with a perpetual cold in the head, while things were as leaky vessels from which the water streams unperceived. But these men themselves might be truly called "fleeting," for their character had nothing in it fixed or abiding. Argument with them was barren, if not impossible; they were always ready to produce new riddles from their quiver, and discharge them like arrows upon their opponent; before the latter could recover from the shock of the first, he was struck by a second. But in spite of all this biting satire on the shifting-hued but hollow dialectic of those out-of-date philosophers, Plato's early acquaintance with Heraclitean doctrine did not fail to exert a permanent influence upon him. Aristotle at least—and his testimony on this point is decisive—traces such an influence in the fact that the things of sense, by reason of their unceasing variation, were not held by Plato to be proper objects of knowledge. And it is quite true that the investigation of nature did not enter till late into his scientific labours, and then played a relatively unimportant part in them.

But we are not to think of Plato's youth as entirely taken up with artistic and philosophic interests. We may be sure that he spent some portion of his early years in the camp, perhaps as a cavalryman. Even in ordinary times, the young Athenian was required to perform garrison and sentry duty. Much more so at an epoch like this, when Athens was straining every nerve to meet the attack of Sparta. Universal levies of all capable of bearing arms were not infrequent at this time. And when the great war was over, neutrality was impossible in the party struggle which formed its tragic epilogue. Even had it been possible,

the youthful nephew of Charmides, and great-nephew of Critias, would none the less have been found on the side of the kinsmen whom he honoured so highly, and who were at the same time the most influential party-leaders of the day.

With all these facts present to our minds, we see how improbable it is that Plato's career of authorship should have begun early. This impression is strengthened by considerations of another kind. From the beginning Plato wrote all his works in the form of dialogues, and in these, apart from one exception, Socrates is always introduced, generally as the central figure. It is, of course, not impossible that this homage—the most magnificent in the whole history of literature—was paid during the lifetime of its object. But it is far more intelligible if we regard it as an offering to the dead. A much deeper significance attaches, on this view, to what would otherwise be simply an expression of esteem or a literary artifice. The image of the dead whom we have loved, especially if they have been taken from us suddenly, haunts us waking or sleeping. Thus it was with Plato; the disciple could not bear to part from the master who had been violently torn from him. The artistic impulse, together with the promptings of grateful affection, constrained him to resume the prematurely interrupted converse, to give some share in it to contemporaries and posterity, to put his own best thoughts and feelings in the mouth of the departed. We may assume, then, though with something less than absolute certainty, that with Plato, as with his companions, the writing of Socratic dialogues did not precede, but followed, the death of Socrates.

2. The spring of 399 marked an epoch in Plato's life in more than one way. With this date his years of study end, and his years of travel begin. We have no ground for assuming that his safety was threatened, be the story true or false that he ascended the tribune to speak in defence of his friend, but was compelled to desist by hostile cries from the jurors, directed, as we may suppose, more against his family than his person. On the other hand, it may well have been that he felt at first as if life in Athens had now been embittered for him. But what was more important

was that with the death of that friend who had been almost a father to him, the strongest tie which bound him to his home had been broken. We may be sure that he had before then been seized by a longing to see the world. But the wish not to lose sooner than was necessary the old man whom he loved, was well adapted to keep the taste for travel in check. Now, however, that draught of hemlock had removed the last obstacle.

Plato spent some dozen years abroad. But we can hardly suppose that these years were not interrupted by longer or shorter visits to his own city. And we may be sure that his travels were something different from a mere restless hurrying to and fro. He did not aim, as Herodotus and Hecatæus had done, at filling his memory and his tablets in the shortest possible time with a motley collection of impressions and information. He desired to see and admire the wonders of nature and art—the Pyramids of Egypt no less than the snowy cap of the Sicilian volcano. He wished, further, to gain knowledge of those subjects which were more fully studied abroad than in the Athens of that day. Not least of all, his object was to see the "men of many cities," and learn to know their "mind."

Three stages of his travels are recorded: Egypt, Lower Italy, and Sicily. But before visiting these distant countries, he resided for a while at Megara, where the orphaned disciples clustered round Euclides (cf. p. 173), perhaps because he was the oldest of their number. After this stay at Megara came, as we are told, his visit to the Nile valley, which, doubtless, consumed a considerable space of time. The empire of the Pharaohs was no longer in existence. But the Persian conquest (525 B.C.) had only touched the surface of the political and social order. At this very time —about 400—there occurred an outburst of national hate. The foreign yoke was broken and superseded by the ephemeral authority of native dynasts, supported by Greek and Libyan lances. The primæval civilization of that great people made a profound impression on Plato. In the "Timæus," one of his latest works, he makes an Egyptian priest say to Solon: "You Greeks are boys." The continuity

of tradition, lasting unbroken for thousands of years; the immovable solidity of the priestly regulations governing all intellectual life; the fixity of style, crystallized long ago, and now apparently unchangeable, in music and the plastic arts, the "hoary science;"—all this was for him an imposing spectacle. Still more so were the hereditary transmission of employments, the highly developed bureaucracy, the strict separation of callings and their far-advanced subdivision—an idea of which last may be gained from the very modern-sounding description given by Herodotus of medical specialists. ("Some are oculists . . . others dentists; others, again, treat internal diseases.") The division of labour, in sharp contrast to Athenian many-sidedness and versatility, was a corner-stone of his social and political thought; no doubt the observation of Egyptian institutions was here in close alliance with the demands which resulted from the Socratic primacy of the intellect. The compulsory education prevalent in Egypt seemed to him worthy of imitation, as did also their concrete methods of arithmetical instruction, based on profound pedagogic insight, in which garlands, fruits, drinking-cups, were passed from hand to hand amid the "jests and merriment" of the children. And he praises with great fervour the custom, fixed for ages by an unchanging legislation, of familiarizing the young with beautiful music and beautiful gestures.

Plato made a stay of considerable length at Heliopolis, the original seat of Egyptian religion and priestly wisdom, where, at about the commencement of our era, the geographer Strabo was shown the apartments formerly occupied by the Athenian philosopher. Situated on an artificial eminence some five miles to the north-west of the ancient Memphis and modern Cairo, the Temple of the Sun, together with the buildings which housed its great army of priests, may be regarded as a peaceful University town, presenting a sharp contrast to the noise and bustle of the neighbouring metropolis. In this neighbourhood, which is not very attractive now, but which in those days was diversified by the great ship-canal and the lakes fed from it, we may imagine Plato walking for his pleasure, perhaps in the

long-vanished Avenue of the Sphinx. His mind may well have been filled with reverent awe by the great age of the magnificent temple-grounds, of whose former glories the only remaining witness is an obelisk of rose-granite, towering to a height of more than sixty feet, now the centre of a swaying mass of vegetation, but in ancient days one of two ornaments placed on both sides of the main entrance. From the inscription, which is legible to this day, Plato might learn, if he had a linguist for his guide, that the monument had been raised, more than fifteen centuries before his own birth, by King Usirtasen I. Plato's friend, the philosopher and astronomer Eudoxus, also visited Heliopolis, not long afterwards, and spent sixteen months there, devoting himself to observations of the stars; a few decades earlier, Democritus had measured his strength against that of the Egyptian mathematicians (cf. Vol. I. p. 318). From these facts we may draw two inferences. There can have been no insuperable linguistic difficulty in the exchange of thought, whether we suppose that communication between the Greek investigators and the Egyptian scholars was established by means of interpreters, or whether there were already among the priests some who, like the arch-priest Manetho a century later, possessed an adequate knowledge of Greek. We may conjecture, too, that the Hellenes still had something to learn from the astronomical observations, reaching back for centuries, of the Egyptians; while it is doubtful whether the creators of mathematics were any longer in advance of their gifted pupils. Whichever of these two studies it was that Plato followed—Cicero says both (astronomy and arithmetic)—he shows himself very well informed on Egyptian matters. Even where he exhibits Egyptian ideas in the playful guise of myth, there is nothing arbitrary in his manipulation of them. He preserves the peculiar form of the names of divinities, which he does not, like Herodotus, replace by corresponding names from the Hellenic pantheon, even to the point of violating the laws of Greek phonetics. Thus he speaks of Theuth; he knows that the ibis bird is sacred to him, and he calls him the inventor of writing, of astronomy,

of surveying, and of arithmetic; thus completely agreeing with the hieroglyphics, which name the god Dhuti the Lord of Writing, the first writer of books, the calculator of the heavens, the overseer of the survey, and so on. There is a long and somewhat ambiguous passage in Plato's "Statesman," in which we may perhaps see evidence of the pains taken by his friends among the priests to give him an exalted opinion, yet one not too crudely at variance with fact, of the importance of their order. And in reality their power was increasing at that period, while the reputation of the warrior caste, after a series of defeats in the field, was sinking lower and lower. The church, indeed, was the only guardian of the national culture and traditions. She possessed the key to the heart of the people. For that reason she was flattered and courted, both by the foreign autocrats, by the Persians, as by the Ethiopians before them and the Macedonians after them, and by those native pretenders to the throne who, when not engaged in resisting alien conquerors, were continually quarrelling among themselves.

A short sea-voyage brings the traveller from the mouths of the Nile to the shore of Cyrene. Here, too, Plato made some stay, and was much in the company of Theodorus, an eminent mathematician, who had been trained in astronomy and music, and who had early turned aside from "pure speculation" to the special sciences. Later authors include him in the circle of the Pythagoreans. Plato, however, who introduces him into three of his dialogues as an interlocutor, terms him repeatedly and emphatically a friend of Protagoras. This friendship must have been matter of general knowledge; otherwise Plato, who desires to do honour to Theodorus, his former teacher, but is a little out of sympathy with Protagoras, would hardly have mentioned it. In passing, there is one inference, at least, which we may draw with certainty. The procedure of Protagoras in discussing the foundations of mathematics, and (according to our view; see Vol. I. p. 455) in maintaining their origin in experience, cannot have been regarded by the representatives of that science as an act of hostility.

The next goal of his wanderings was Lower Italy, whither he was probably urged by the same desire of completing his mathematical education. For this was the land of the Pythagoreans. The brotherhood, dispersed a century earlier, had probably left more numerous traces in Tarentum than in any other city. Witness not only the many members of that school whose home was Tarentum, men of whom, it must be admitted, we know little more than their names ; the Attic comedy comprised several works entitled "The Tarentines," which made Pythagorean peculiarities the target of their ridicule. Certainly the Pythagorean adept, with his serious mode of life, his not infrequently morose character, and his occasional leaning towards ascetic self-torture, stood out in sufficiently sharp contrast with the luxury of that wealthy city. According to Plato's own testimony, Tarentum at Carnival-time (so we may render "the Feast of Dionysus") was like nothing so much as a drunken man. Social conditions were exceptionally stable in this town, which was situated between the Tarentine gulf with its excellent harbour, and the *mare piccolo* with its incomparable wealth of edible shell-fish. Class-contrasts were softened, for Nature poured out her gifts with lavish hands, and at the same time the rich endeavoured, intelligently and successfully, to relieve the privations of their less-propertied fellow-citizens. The form of government was a moderate democracy, and at the head of the State there stood for a succession of years the very man for whose sake Plato took up his residence in Tarentum, and with whom he was connected by a friendship celebrated throughout antiquity. This man was Archytas, a name which our story cannot pass over in silence.

3. Of all the Greeks known to us as having been characterized by an harmonious combination of many-sided talents, Archytas was perhaps the most eminent. Of considerable importance as a statesman and commander, a profound thinker, a distinguished investigator, to some extent a pioneer, in several departments of knowledge, he was at the same time a lover of cheerful society, an excellent flute-player, and a kind master to his slaves, with whose

children he did not disdain to play, even inventing a new toy for them, the rattle. He was as far as Pericles was from practising any of the arts of the demagogue (cf. p. 43), and it is not a little to the credit of his fellow-citizens that they allowed their "foremost man" to work for them, to guide their fortunes and therewith those of the confederacy of South Italian cities to which they belonged. Archytas was seven times elected Strategus, he was successful in war with the neighbouring Messapians and Lucanians, and he maintained the dignity of his country, even when confronted by the then all-powerful Syracuse. He lived a full life of varied activity, and his good fortune followed him to the end, for he perished in a storm at sea and was spared the infirmities of old age.

In his intellectual work, the first place is taken by his contributions to mathematical and physical science. Mechanics, as a branch of mathematical physics, was actually founded by him. He was also the inventor of the first automaton known to us—a wooden pigeon balanced by a weight hanging from a pulley, and caused to fly by the escape of compressed air from a valve. As a geometer he earned the praises of the greatest ancient authority, Eudemus. The latter names him, Leodamas of Thasus, and Theætetus the Athenian as the men who "enriched the subject with new theorems, and arranged the parts of it in a more scientific sequence." He advanced the theory of proportion, and solved the much-discussed problem of the duplication of the cube. He also did good work in acoustics and the theory of music. The fragments of certain writings on logic and ethics, which have been attributed to him, are, in part, demonstrably spurious. But that his investigations were not confined to the special sciences seems clear from the circumstance that Aristotle, in a lost work comprising three books, treated "Of the Philosophy of Archytas." The not very numerous fragments whose genuineness is undoubted afford us but few glimpses of his deeper thought. There are, however, two utterances of his, both of them significant, and inwardly connected with each other, which we are unwilling to pass

by. Influenced, possibly, by the Pythagorean harmony of the spheres, Archytas discusses the limited receptivity of the sense of hearing, and compares the organs of sense with vessels which, having once been filled, can hold no more. In the other passage he raises the question—Why are the component parts of plants and animal bodies, so far as special adjustments permit, of a rounded form? In this connexion he cites the trunks and branches of trees, as well as human arms and legs. Although his answer to the problem—that the cause is "the proportionality of the similar"—is not transparently clear to us, still the breadth of view implied in his raising the question at all, and his evident disdain of the comfortable teleological pillow, are sufficiently noteworthy. The similarity between the two investigations lies in the fact that neither of them recognizes any sharp line of division between the organic and the inorganic world. It is clear that Archytas had much to give. But assuredly the most important of the benefits which Plato received from him was the collective impression produced by his great and noble personality and the high station which he either then occupied or was shortly to attain. This impression was in harmony with one of Plato's ideals, which thus received a new and powerful impetus. For Plato found here, in casual and temporary union, that which it was his dearest wish—a wish expressed with the most passionate accents of his eloquent lips—to see permanently and universally combined: political power and scientific insight. His earnest endeavours, stimulated without doubt by this example, to procure a share in the same blessing for another important part of the Greek world, brought him again and again to the land where he went through the richest, and yet also the saddest, experiences of his life. There the hand of the philosopher did in very truth grasp the levers of history—with what result we shall presently see. Now, the way to this land was pointed out to him, and opened up for him, by Archytas himself and his Pythagorean companions, in virtue of their friendly relations with the high-minded Syracusan prince, Dion.

4. The highly favoured soil of Sicily early became a prize for contending nationalities and parties. The island of Demeter and Core was fertilized with blood. Both these wars and these party-struggles were favourable to the rise, the continuance, and the extension of despotic rule.

In the other parts of the Hellenic world there were two distinct phases of tyranny. The earlier of these sprang for the most part from the war of classes, the later from the use of hired troops. In Sicily the two phases were imperceptibly fused together. Indeed, the two causes we have named were there operative from the first. Gelo had long ago (480) employed mercenaries in his victorious struggle with the Carthaginians. The pre-Greek population of the island supplied suitable material in proverbial abundance, and repeated contests with the great neighbouring power in the south-west made it necessary to take full advantage of this resource. Moreover, the war of classes had raged more fiercely and persistently here than elsewhere. The mixture of Greek with native blood may have been to blame, or the hot climate, or the luxuriant fertility of the soil; in any case want of moderation was the dominant factor in both the public and the private life of the Siceliots. Unbridled in desire, insatiable in pleasure, ruthless in revenge, these wild, passionate natures showed little inclination towards those perpetual compromises which are the indispensable condition for the successful working of a political constitution. Here the Demos expelled the rich; there it schemed to plunder them, and was driven by them out of the city. Every such conflict offered a welcome handle to the usurper. Although there were instances in which a tyranny displaced an oligarchy, this fate was usually reserved for democracies. "In Italy," says Treitschke, speaking of mediæval and modern times, "democratic republicanism everywhere succumbed to tyranny." In Sicily the same natural tendency was materially assisted by a special circumstance. "Packed full of miscellaneous crowds of humanity," is the phrase by which Thucydides makes Alcibiades describe the cities of Sicily, the suggestion

being that they are thus marked out as the easy prey of a conqueror. The same circumstance made them a still easier prey for the representatives of force and absolutism. Moreover, that miscellaneity and that populousness were the result, partly of various accidental coincidences, but partly also of deliberate scheming. Among the causes which contributed to these effects, we may mention the expulsion of entire populations both by the national enemy, the Carthaginian, and by the fiercely contending rival factions; the settling of mercenary troops in homes granted them as part of their hire; and, lastly, the unscrupulous efforts of powerful rulers consciously and persistently directed towards the strengthening of their own authority by diminishing the homogeneity, and with it the capacity for resistance of the burgher class. Thus in Sicily the maxim of absolutism, "Divide et impera," was practised throughout the fifth and fourth centuries, with disastrous consequences unparalleled in the remainder of the Hellenic world.

The pinnacle of perfection in Sicilian tyranny, as also the highest development of that island's power, are both associated with the name of Dionysius I. Beginning as a subordinate official, he crept by demagogic by-paths into the possession of a sceptre, which he afterwards maintained with stubborn energy and the most far-sighted circumspection. He was not a military genius. In the course of his reign of thirty-eight years he suffered almost as many defeats as he gained victories. If, however, none of his defeats proved crushing; if, time after time, he converted initial disaster into final triumph; if he stemmed the flood of Carthaginian conquest, extended his own authority over the greater part of Sicily and a not inconsiderable part of Lower Italy; if his influence counted for much in Epirus and the Greek motherland;—these results were due to his iron will and his inexhaustible fertility of resource. When his near kinsman Dion brought Plato to court, he was forty-three years of age, and had sat for eighteen years on the throne of Syracuse. As might be expected, we have next to no detailed information on the intercourse of the two

men. Their early estrangement and its far-reaching after-effects are all that is known to us.

In the mean time, Plato had an opportunity of viewing the residential city at his leisure. In those days Syracuse was the first city in the Hellenic world. It occupied the position which Athens had already lost, and Alexandria had not yet won. As soon as the sovereign's guest left the palace on the "Island of Quails" (Ortygia)—an island which once had been the whole of Syracuse, and has since become so again—there lay spread before him in the wide plain and on the encircling heights a brilliant capital, surging with a good-humoured, pleasure-loving crowd, all eyes and ears. Let us accompany him in one of his sallies. His way takes him to the outer ring of the city, past the Latomia, or disused quarries, excavations which are now overgrown with rank vegetation, and in which, a quarter of a century before Plato's visit, thousands of Athenian war-prisoners had come to a miserable end. Sadly his mind reverts to those victims of an unblest enterprise ; but his thoughts are bitter when he remembers the authors of it, champions of an imperialistic policy, which, as pupil of Socrates, he utterly detests. But his melancholy reflexions are cut suddenly short. He is caught up and carried away by a passing wave of humanity, which does not stop till it halts before the street-stage of a professional reciter. The latter proceeds to regale his auditory with sketches of Syracusan every-day life, delivered in broad Doric, with strongly emphasized comic effects, a lively play of gesture, and sharply marked changes of voice. These monologues and duologues, which went by the name of "mimes," and of which our knowledge is gained rather from imitations than from the few actual fragments, bore titles such as "The Tunny-fisher," "The Mother-in-law," "The Women at Breakfast," "The Seamstresses," and were distinguished by their powerful realism, their irresistible wit, their pithy aphorisms. Henceforth they were included in Plato's favourite reading. If he afterwards produced dialogues which were masterpieces of individual characterization, his debt was probably greater to the homely prose of the Sicilian

mime-writer than to the tragic and comic poets of Athens. Not but what the muse of Sophron sometimes took higher flights into the realm of mythology ; one of his works was entitled "Prometheus," and in another Hera appeared as a character. This would have been impossible without the freest handling of the mythical material—an example from which Plato may perhaps have learnt something. But let us return to Syracuse. It is a day of festival, and the theatre is open. The crowd streams in to the spectacle, and the stranger follows them. Here he makes a closer acquaintance with the comic poet Epicharmus, whose native gifts of an observant eye and a sober, well-balanced judgment have been supplemented in the home of his adoption (he was born, like Hippocrates, in the island of Cos) by many new elements of varied culture. He had met Xenophanes at the Court of Hiero, and the death of that prince, in 467, was soon followed by his own, at an advanced age. No other comic poet ever displayed equal skill in the combination of jest with earnest, or commended the philosophical tenets of his day to the ear and brain of his audience with such subtle drollery. Suppose his theme the doctrine of Heraclitus ; he was not content to clothe the theorem of universal flux in such verses as—

> "Naught is constant, naught abiding ; all things whirl in ceaseless change."

The "Theorem of Becoming" must also be illustrated by a comic episode invented for the purpose. A tardy debtor justifies his delay by the remark that since contracting the debt he has become an entirely new man, and is therefore not bound by the old obligation. The creditor allows the excuse to pass, and adds a pleasant surprise in the shape of an invitation to dinner next day. But when the expectant guest arrives at the house of this most hospitable creditor, the latter has him turned back by his slaves, and declares, in answer to his angry protests, that he, too, has become a new man since yesterday. If Plato saw such scenes as these enacted, he must have been pleasantly

reminded of his distant home and the Heraclitean extravagances of Cratylus, the teacher of his youth. There were other impressions, too, of a more permanent kind, that Plato received from Epicharmus, and of these we shall have to treat more minutely in the sequel.

The day is brought to an end by a walk up the gentle slopes of Epipolæ, whence charming prospects are to be had over the city quarters lying at the beholder's feet, as well as over the adjacent sea and country. Here Plato's astonishment is roused by the colossal walls and fortifications, far in excess of the customary Greek scale; and he admires the energy of his royal host, an energy which no obstacle can daunt. Such reflexions, however, did not open his heart towards Dionysius. Not but what there were points of contact between the two men. The tyrant was no pleasure-seeker. The heavily laden tables of Syracuse, the refinements of that art of cookery which had first been reduced to a system in that city, were as little congenial to him as to Plato. He lived soberly and temperately, absolutely devoted to his work on the great task of his life. But the objects to gain which his will-power was strung to its highest tension were not such as a disciple of Socrates could view with sympathetic approval. Certainly Plato never addressed to Dionysius those moral sermons which a tainted tradition has put in his mouth. He had not come to court to tell the "tyrant" that he must of necessity be unhappy, though no doubt this was his conviction. But if he had thought it an unworthy thing to keep his conviction for the nonce locked up in his own bosom, he would never have accepted the invitation of a prince who was then a man of mature years, whose success was at its zenith, and whom he could never hope to convert. We may be sure that he acted with unfailing courtesy. But this did not exclude a certain inward coolness and shy reserve, such as Dionysius, in virtue of his peculiar temperament and position, was the very man to detect quickly and to feel keenly.

5. Tyranny has always resembled a coin subject to violent fluctuations of value. That pendulum, the general

judgment, has more than once swung from the one extreme of bitter hatred and contempt to the opposite extreme of envious and even reverential admiration. The "most bloodstained of all creatures," the lawless "adversary of all right and justice," is not seldom transformed into a monarch of renown, whom contemporaries and posterity alike praise for his glorious and beneficent deeds. Such a reaction, too, possesses a peculiar power of hastening its own progress. The more respected a government is, the more assured does its position become; and the more assured its position, the more easily can it dispense with the less reputable expedients of administration. Again, Dionysius desired something more than merely to be feared. Like Napoleon, he understood the art of winning by kindness as well as that of terrifying by severity. He was also a poet, endowed with all the proverbial irritability of the class. But in order to achieve as much as he did in this sphere —he was awarded a prize for tragedy at Athens, not long before his death—it was necessary for him to study carefully the works of the old poets, and this took up a considerable part of his not too generous allowance of leisure. All this is hardly compatible with dulness or coarseness of mind. There is a line of his verse which runs as follows: "Despotic power, the mother of all wrong." The Greek word here used, *τυραννίς*, betrays still more clearly the fact that he was unable to put his own position away from his thoughts. Very probably the context of that line of verse contained a discussion, in an allusive form, of the points for or against his own character. Be this as it may, he had every right to claim for himself that he had solved, though by unconstitutional and illegal methods, a problem which was incapable of being solved constitutionally. At the time when he seized the sceptre, the Greek population of Sicily was in deadly peril. The victorious march of Carthage had begun. Selinus, Himera, Agrigentum, had been taken in the space of a few years; the inhabitants of three cities had been massacred or driven into exile; nowhere among the Greeks could be perceived the faintest sign of a united resistance, based on definite

alliances. On the contrary, their quarrels among themselves had served as an invitation to the national foe. Dionysius did not thrust the boundary of Carthaginian dominion very far back towards the West, but he definitively checked its otherwise inevitable advance eastwards. He might well imagine he possessed a title to grateful recognition on the part of the Greeks, and think himself worthy to receive what Gelo and Hiero, his models in small things as well as great, had received before him, the consecrating homage of the poets, the thinkers, the great festival assemblies of Hellas. But all these expectations were grievously disappointed. At Olympia, where Hiero had won those brilliant victories which Pindar and Bacchylides had immortalized, there awaited him nothing but scorn and insult. The mob, hounded on by the orator Lysias against the "tyrant of Sicily," began to storm the tent, all draped in purple and gold, which was occupied by the Syracusan deputation under the sovereign's own brother. The poems of Dionysius were received with hisses. Under the stress of these humiliations he is said to have been nearly driven mad.

For all this, it remains questionable whether the wounding of the great monarch's pride by the lack of deference on the part of Plato was the sole cause of the final rupture. It may be that Dionysius was here guided by a feeling of mistrust—that watchful, consuming mistrust which filled his life with torment and made him the type of the "dark-browed ogre" surrounded by spies and police agents. His brother-in-law Dion, who was soon to be his son-in-law as well, was a prince of majestic presence and great natural gifts. In him Dionysius saw the mainstay of his dynasty. He could not but note with concern how the impressionable young man gradually surrendered to the spell of the stranger's forceful speech and thought. He scented disaster in the air, and his despot's conscience gave him licence to meet the coming danger with a violent remedy. When Plato left Syracuse in the company of the Spartan ambassador, Dionysius requested the latter to rid him for ever from all anxiety on Plato's account. Pollis fulfilled

this commission, in what he no doubt thought the least objectionable way, by setting his companion ashore at Ægina. A fierce feud was then raging between Athens and its island neighbour. Every Athenian caught on Æginetan soil was doomed—so the people had decreed—either to death or to slavery. It was the milder penalty that fell to Plato's lot, perhaps because he had come against his will; perhaps, too, because he had been born in the island. Thus his experience included the sharpest contrasts of fortune—to-day a guest in a king's palace, to-morrow a slave in the market-place waiting for a lord and master. A little more, and that great light would have been extinguished in the dull prison of a menial existence. But fate was in league with philosophy. A wealthy Cyrenian, named Anniceris, who had known Plato since the latter's visit to Cyrene, happened to be for the moment in Ægina. He hastened to purchase Plato's freedom, and conveyed him away from the island. Some Athenian friends collected a sum of money—two to three thousand drachmas, we are told—and this was offered to Anniceris to repay him for his outlay. The offer was generously declined, and the money used to buy the land on which Plato's school was built. The whole story reads sufficiently like a novel, but there is no serious reason to doubt its authenticity, supported as it is by the testimony of good witnesses and a casual allusion of Aristotle.

6. In one of the most charming passages in his works Plato brings before us his master, Socrates, fleeing from the bustle and uproar of the city in the company of a young friend. The two hasten to pass the gate, choose themselves a cool resting-place, and there, reclining on a gentle slope of turf under the leafy awning of a spreading plane, begin that exchange of thought and discourse which makes up the dialogue "Phædrus." It is a cheering thought that the profound feeling for natural beauty which speaks to us in this description does not, in Plato's case, bear witness to an ungratified longing. When, at the age of forty, he returned to Athens to reside there permanently, he formed the resolution of establishing himself as a teacher—an unparalleled

step for a scion of an illustrious family. It had been chiefly in the neighbourhood of the gymnasia that Socrates had consorted with the youths who desired instruction. Plato followed the precedent thus set, as Antisthenes had perhaps already done (in the Cynosarges, see p. 170), and as Aristotle afterwards did (in the Lyceum). The three great gymnasia of Athens were thus brought into permanent association with philosophy. Plato chose the Academy, and thereby gave the name a symbolic meaning for all time.

This gymnasium was situated about twenty minutes' walk outside the "Double Gate" that led from the magnificent street known as the "Dromos" (or racecourse) into the suburb of "Potters' Town." The road by which it was approached was thickly bordered with public monuments of all kinds, notably with graves of the honoured dead, including Pericles and the tyrannicides Harmodius and Aristogeiton. In its neighbourhood were many holy places, particularly an altar dedicated to Athene, set in a ring of twelve olive trees. The nature-lover Cimon, the same who had planted the market-place with trees, had, by means of artificial irrigation, transformed the hallowed precinct into a veritable park. Here, by the side of broad carefully kept paths, were stretches of thick turf, shady avenues, and quiet lounge-spaces under gigantic trees, numbered among the wonders of Athens. Here, where (to quote Aristophanes) "the elm held whispering converse with the plane," Plato had perhaps once gambolled with other boys, "fragrant with hedge-blooms and innocence." He now acquired a plot of ground, near the shrines and the gymnasium, where, in the centre of a garden of moderate extent, a building stood which was to be long the centre of his school. Here Plato fixed his own residence, and spent the remainder of his life in familiar intercourse with a circle of intimate disciples. Here took place those frugal banquets which contrasted to such great advantage with the many courses of the generals' dinners—those banquets seasoned with wit and intellect, which were imitated in all schools of philosophy, and which found a

reflex in a special type of literature. They were held, sometimes in commemoration of the founder's birthday, sometimes in connexion with sacrifices offered to the patron goddesses of the institution. These were the Muses, who in all places of education—except the gymnasia, where their place was taken by Hermes—were honoured by a great festival every month, probably also by a humble daily offering, just as all proceedings in the law courts, all meetings of the Assembly, were preceded by minor sacrifices. To the Muses, whose shrine was erected by Plato, probably in the garden, were added the Graces. Their statues were placed there by Plato's nephew, who also provided them with an inscription, the words of which are still extant—

> "Goddesses, take this gift of goddesses, Muses of Graces ;
> These Speusippus set up, grateful for knowledge bestowed."

The lectures were delivered in halls in which, besides the ἐξέδρα, or chief seat, there were placed rows of stone benches, such as have recently been discovered at Delos and Olympia, in the immediate proximity of gymnasia. The liberality with which such institutions were treated by the local authorities (demes) was, perhaps, due not least of all to the prospect of material advantages. For the presence of a large number of students and the increased use of the gymnasium brought additional employment and profit to the inhabitants of the district in which it was situated. Plato gradually gathered round him a band of young men from all parts of Greece. Only a minority had chosen science for their calling in life ; most of them sought general culture, chiefly as a preparation for politics. It would appear that the larger part of them belonged to the propertied classes. We learn from the gibes of the comic poets that the young Academics affected a certain studied elegance of dress and manner. They might be known by the careful arrangement of their hair, their dainty caps, and exquisite walking-sticks—matters in which they presented a contrast, probably intentional, to the less civilized fashions of the rival school of Antisthenes (cf. p. 151). Financially, the school must have been mainly supported

by voluntary contributions from the pupils. We find mention of occasional assistance received from a few friends of great wealth, such as Dion of Syracuse, but without an abundance of fees, whether fixed in amount or left to the discretion of the student, it is hard to see how the institution could have maintained its existence. Had Plato defrayed all expenses out of his own means, so singular a circumstance would not have passed unnoticed. Nor was his financial position any too brilliant. This appears partly from the fact that his father received a grant of land in the conquered island of Ægina, partly from the story of his redemption from slavery by his friends, and the use, already referred to, which was made of the money declined by Anniceris. Nor are these inferences contradicted by Plato's will, a document which, but for a single lacuna, has been preserved entire. The Academy, as we shall now briefly designate the institution, could not, in its modest beginnings, compete for a moment in extent and magnificence with the school founded by Aristotle, the tutor of princes. Still, the two institutions had certain fundamental features in common. It is a remarkable fact, though one which can be strictly proved and satisfactorily explained, that neither of them possessed a library in which the founder's works were preserved. Neither of them possessed the rights of a corporation from the first or for a long time to come; they were the property of the founder, and were transferred by testamentary disposition from him to others, who again bequeathed them to definite individuals. There was no regular endowment or trust fund; instead, an earnest appeal was made to the conscience of the heirs, who were adjured to keep the institution accessible to all "fellow-students of philosophy," and to maintain it as common property, "just as if it were a holy place," to quote a significant clause from the will of Theophrastus. The president or "leader" of the school was always in the first instance nominated by the founder; afterwards the office was generally filled by election. In the Academy, as in many mediæval universities, the appointment was made by the direct, secret vote of all the young men. The result was occasionally unexpected;

and sometimes, as in the case of the third head of the school, was arrived at by a bare majority. Mere considerations of courtesy were sometimes allowed to prevail; thus we read that Socratides, who had been elected solely because of his seniority, voluntarily renounced a dignity which he had not earned in any way. It seems natural to infer from all this that the president was by no means the only teacher—a point on which we have little detailed information that we can trust, beyond the statement that Plato himself was assisted by Speusippus and Menedemus of Pyrrha. It is equally clear that instruction did not necessarily come to a standstill during the temporary absence of the head; as, for example, when Plato visited Sicily for the second and third time.

There can be no doubt that Plato's own work as a teacher covered most of the branches of philosophy. That notes of his lectures were taken down by pupils, and sometimes published afterwards, we learn from casual allusions of Aristotle and from the title of one of his lost works. A certain amusing incident, a favourite story of Aristotle's, teaches us that some at least of Plato's lecture-courses were open to an extensive circle of auditors, and that if the expectations aroused by the title were disappointed, even Plato himself could not escape a fiasco. Besides lectures, his work included the discussion of philosophical problems in classes consisting of a much smaller number of pupils. These discussions, echoes of which reach us in some of the later dialogues, may not inaptly be compared to the exercises of a German *Seminar*. Possibly we have in this circumstance the explanation of a statement which, taken absolutely, is not quite credible, namely, that in his later years (when, be it observed, his fame was greatest and his pupils most numerous) he delivered his lectures in his own little garden and nowhere else. Still greater intimacy with the master was enjoyed by at least a select portion of the disciples, some of whom, it would appear, were every day invited by him to share his midday meal. Not a few of them, in any case, must have taken part in the banquets to which we have already referred. It is clear that Plato

found his most effective recreation in cheerful and refined converse over the wine-bowl; and here, too, he saw one of the most potent instruments of education. His successors were of the same mind; some of them—the affable Speusippus, the ponderous Xenocrates, the indefatigable Aristotle—did not disdain to draw up "Rules for the Table" and "Drinking-codes," thus providing a wholesome discipline for their guests even in external matters. Of the powerful impulses which proceeded from the Academy, and of the personality of its members, it will be time to speak later on, at a more suitable stage of this exposition.

For the effects produced by the foundation of this school did in truth reach out far into the ages. At the entrance of the Academy stood an antique monument, used as the starting-point in torch-races, instituted in honour of the friend of man, the Titan Prometheus. Ten lines of runners —ten being the number of the Attic tribes—took up their stand at measured intervals, and, passing their torches from hand to hand, strove to carry them to the goal still burning. The great Athenian schools of philosophy were engaged in a similar contest. It was the earnest endeavour of all of them to preserve undimmed and bear onwards through successive generations that flame which had been kindled from the Promethean spark. And in this contest the school of Plato, which outlived all the others, carried off the prize.

We have now followed up to a certain point the life-journey of the man who founded the Academy. Here, for the present, we leave the subject, at least in its more external aspect. His ship has gained the sheltering harbour from which it will not yet for a while be driven to face the storms again. In the mean time we shall endeavour to trace the course of Plato's inner development during the interval, with such guidance as may be had from the products of his genius.

CHAPTER II.

THE GENUINENESS AND CHRONOLOGICAL ORDER OF PLATO'S WORKS.

1. THE problem which we hope to solve in the next section is beset with difficulties of no common order. In no case—not even if the external conditions had been the most favourable we can think of—would it have been an easy one. Let us indulge for once in a vision of what might have been. Let us imagine that some one intimate with Plato—his nephew Speusippus, for example—had done something which would have cost him no more than a quarter of an hour of his leisure, and would have rendered a lasting service to the history of philosophy—suppose he had jotted down on some loose sheet the chronological order of his uncle's writings, and that this memorandum had been preserved. We should not then have been deprived of the most important auxiliary in the study of Plato's mental history. Gaps, it is true, would still have remained, such as those which, in Goethe's case, for example, are filled up with the help of copious diaries, an extensive correspondence, a great number of conversations reported by contemporaries. But our present problem might have been regarded as solved in the main. Still, the historian's difficulties would not even then have been entirely removed. The two main lines of inquiry—that which follows the chronological sequence, and that which follows the connexion of ideas—would still have crossed each other at every turn. As things are, the case is vastly worse than this. When we have to do with a

thinker whose career was one of restless advance (and Plato was such a thinker), the standpoint of development cannot be neglected with impunity. But it is only here and there that the necessary materials lie ready to our hand. Thus, in respect of the "Laws," we learn from Aristotle that this dialogue was subsequent to the "Republic;" from other authorities, that it was published posthumously, and consequently that it was the work of Plato's extreme old age. Here, then, the literary tradition comes up to our ideal; the relative order of the two works, and the exact date of one of them, though not of both, are known to us with absolute certainty. The inquiring spirit of our century has not, however, been deterred by the obstacles which stand, mountain-high, across its path. The chronological order and the authenticity of Plato's writings have been the subjects of endless investigation and discussion, with the result, happily, that out of a great number of widely divergent views, something like an agreement has been evolved—at least so near an approach to agreement as contains the promise of further progress in the same direction.

These doubts respecting genuineness are the reverse side of an extraordinary, indeed an unparalleled, piece of good fortune. Of all the original thinkers of ancient Greece, Plato is the only one whose works have been preserved entire. All that he ever wrote has come down to us, and something more as well. This something more is still *sub judice.* Even in ancient days, experts were not altogether of one mind on the subject. Our authorities speak of "genuine" dialogues, of doubtful dialogues, of dialogues "rejected by all." This last class, some of which have been lost, need not trouble us further. But the doubtful dialogues grew, during the first two-thirds of the nineteenth century, to be a terribly large fraction of the whole. That critical sense which had been exercised in the field of history, philology, and, not least of all, theology, was gradually cultivated to an unnatural and excessive degree of keenness. Things came to such a pass at last that even the boldest quailed and began to doubt

his right to doubt. Only a quarter of Plato's works had survived the ordeal; of the remaining three-fourths each had, by at least one vote, been condemned as spurious. We may note, in passing, that this verdict contained an unintentional, but exaggerated, tribute to the genius of Plato. Only the most perfect of his creations were judged worthy of him. And yet this extravagance of scepticism might have been avoided if Aristotle's warning had been heeded. For he closes his criticism of the "Laws" with the following remark, aimed at Plato's writings in general: "There is genius and intellect, originality and stimulus, in them all; still we can hardly expect to find them faultless in every part." It was overlooked that the career of even the most gifted artist has its stages of preparation, its moments of weariness; and that to disallow all his sketches, preliminary essays, and only half-successful studies, is much the same thing as to strip away from a chain of mountain-peaks the lesser heights which lead up to them and the passes which divide them. Nor is it only by the perfection of his art that Plato has diminished the credit of his own works. The very breadth and greatness of his intellect has contributed, indirectly, to the same result. The unremitting practice of the most searching self-criticism is so far from being to every one's taste that not every one can as much as understand or believe in it. "Is it credible," wrote a hot-headed critic at the beginning of the nineteenth century, "that Plato can have intended to controvert a fundamental point of his own system?" On the ground of this incredibility a particular work (the "Sophist") was rejected, just as in our own day a second has been condemned because, as is asserted, it is not given to the "originator of a theory . . . to hit on such overwhelming objections" as those which are urged in the "Parmenides" against the doctrine of ideas. Moreover, the hypercritical method seemed in danger of revolving in a perpetual circle. One critic objected to work A because of its real or supposed discrepancy with B; another suspected B because of its real or supposed discrepancy with A. It became necessary, as the more clear-sighted—

Friedrich Schleiermacher, for example—had early perceived, to provide criticism with an unassailable basis of operations: to establish a nucleus of works whose authenticity should be raised above all doubt, and which should then serve as an unimpeachable standard to try the claims of the residue. In order to avoid every possibility of error in this preliminary work, it became desirable to discover and collect a mass of such testimony as even the most hardened doubter would shrink from challenging. In this category the foremost place was very properly given to the citations contained in the writings of Aristotle—passages in which the reference is implicit, as well as those where a work of Plato is mentioned by name.

A path was thus entered upon which has, in point of fact, led to the establishment of solid results. But here, as elsewhere, the wrong road lay hard by the right. Arrived at the parting of the ways, criticism took the wrong turn unawares, and strayed further and further away from the true course. The value of the testimony collected was, we do not say over-estimated, but misestimated. That which is attested by Aristotle is genuine beyond question; but that which is not attested by him is not therefore spurious, or even sullied by the least taint of doubt. Only the half of Aristotle's works are in our hands; and, more than that, the citations contained in that half are all incidental in character; they are chiefly of a polemical nature, and their occurrence is purely a matter of chance. The "argument from silence" has thus, in this instance, no force whatever. To take an example, the "Protagoras," one of the greatest and most brilliant of the dialogues, and one against which no whisper of suspicion has ever been breathed, is nowhere mentioned by Aristotle; and it is only in recent years that certain references to it have been discovered, such as would hardly be deemed adequate to establish the genuineness of a disputed work. On the other hand, a single piece of positive testimony may be of the highest importance, not only for a particular work, but for the whole family to which it belongs, if it guarantees the authenticity of a dialogue such as the "Lesser Hippias," which has been treated with scant respect by modern criticism.

2. That relative inferiority of a production which provokes distrust is only a particular variety of a comprehensive class, that of deviations from the normal type, or type deduced from the other works of the same master. Thus a picture bearing on its front the name of Titian may be adjudged as spurious, not only if it is marred by faults such as Titian could not have been guilty of, but also if it exhibits a number of peculiarities foreign to all the known styles of that artist. In the application of this canon great breadth of judgment is required, and the more so the longer the active career of the artist, the greater the number, and more especially the variety, of his works. These considerations are relevant in an especial measure to the case of Plato. Even supposing he never penned a line before he was thirty, his literary activity must have lasted a full half-century. The projects of social reform contained in his "Republic" and "Laws" bear entirely different complexions, and in the presentations of his other doctrines there are not wanting similar instances of deep-seated discrepancy. His literary manner—for example, his handling of the dialogue form—is by no means always the same; his language undergoes manifold transformations both in style and vocabulary. Thus three of his latest works ("Timæus," "Critias," "Laws") contain nearly 1500 words which are absent from his other works, and some, indeed, from the whole of the literature of his time. What, then, is proved if in a particular dialogue we detect a small number of words or phrases not met with elsewhere in Plato, or even if we find a few thoughts which have no close parallels in his other works? Indeed, we must be prepared to encounter serious contradictions, not only in thought, but in that which lies deeper and should therefore be less subject to change—in tone and sentiment. In the "Apology," Aristophanes the comic poet is represented as being, morally, the chief prosecutor of Socrates, and consequently responsible for his execution. But in the "Symposium," Socrates and the author of the "Clouds" are boon companions, and on the friendliest of footings. Let us suppose, what is contrary to fact, that one or other of these two

dialogues had not been proof against every assault. The assertion that both works could not possibly have come from the same hand might very easily in such a case have gained all but universal acceptance, or even have become a shibboleth by which the true and only "scientific critics" would have recognized each other with unfailing certainty.

There is only one kind of discrepancy which possesses absolute probative force—conflict with the ascertained facts of history, above all, references or allusions to persons, events, modes of thought or speech, such as may be shown by irrefragable proofs to have lain outside all possible knowledge of the alleged author of a given work. On such a basis, for example, rests the universal rejection of the work "De Mundo," once attributed to Aristotle. For this work contains, in such numbers as exclude the hypothesis of chance, doctrines and technical terms which we know, on trustworthy authority, to have been first current in the post-Aristotelian Stoic school. The Platonic corpus, however, affords but few openings for the use of this critical weapon, the most effective of those with which we are here concerned. There is thus abundant need for caution; and additional warning is supplied, not only by the contradictions, bordering on the grotesque, which obtain between the subjective "feeling for what is Platonic" of this and that particular investigator, but also by an objective fact of considerable weight. Internal grounds of suspicion, such as are not of convincing force taken by themselves, necessarily produce a stronger or weaker effect according to the presumption which arises out of the way in which a work has been preserved. Let us suppose, for example, that a work were to make its appearance to-morrow, purporting to be part of the literary remains of Goethe, but, at the same time, arousing the distrust of the best experts by its form or matter. The circumstance that Goethe's literary remains have been uninterruptedly in the keeping of trustworthy hands would carry great weight in the final decision of the point. On the other hand, when, a few decades ago, certain letters were given to the world which were alleged to have been written by the

unfortunate Queen Marie Antoinette, there was no similar counterpoise to the internal evidences of forgery which at once presented themselves. For the editor of these profitable letters had no better account to give of their origin than that some of them had formerly been in the possession of an unnamed member of the Convention, and the rest in that of an equally unnamed antiquary. The Platonic cycle occupies an intermediate position between these two extremes. It is true, as we have already remarked, that Plato's writings were not preserved in a library attached to his school; but there must have been a fairly large group of intimate disciples who were well able to distinguish what was genuine from what was spurious, and these men can have had no motive, worthy or unworthy, for remaining silent when occasion arose for a timely protest against fraud or error. Nor are we altogether dependent on the testimony of late manuscripts. Some of the disputed dialogues are authenticated by replies to them which appeared within a century of Plato's death, or by the testimony of ancient papyrus-rolls found in Egypt (Lysis, Euthydemus, Laches). The composition of the entire body of works is known to us from a list, compiled, about the year 200 B.C., by the learned Aristophanes of Byzantium, then director of the Alexandrian Library, and used by him as the basis of his critical edition. Only a part of this list, it is true, has been preserved to us, namely, the enumeration of those fifteen dialogues which Aristophanes arranged in trilogies, while our intermediary authority says of the rest nothing more than "the remaining writings singly and in no fixed order." There is hardly any doubt, however, that a later list, that of Thrasyllus, which contains the thirty-six works known to us, arranged in tetralogies, is based on the list of Aristophanes, and may be accepted as representing it in regard to the lost portion.

At the same time, there are indications in the ancient tradition itself which suggest doubts as to its absolute trustworthiness. Of the thirteen letters included in the Platonic collection—more exactly twelve, as the first purports

to have been written by Dion to Dionysius—there is one, the twelfth, which in our manuscripts has the following note appended to it: "The Platonic authorship is contested." Of similar import is the statement that Thrasyllus, who had included the "Anterastæ" in his edition, yet qualified a casual allusion to that dialogue with the proviso: "if, indeed, the 'Anterastæ' is the work of Plato." These qualifying clauses and expressions of doubt had their origin, as has been conjectured with great probability, in the catalogues of the great libraries themselves. When the librarians at Pergamum or Alexandria had volumes offered to them of somewhat suspicious origin, they would naturally, and quite rightly, incline rather towards purchase than rejection. For a work was thus saved from threatened destruction, while such suspicions as could not be immediately confirmed or allayed might be placed on record by a note in the catalogue. Thus between the incontestably authentic and the incontestably spurious there might easily come into being an intermediate zone of doubtful works. Other works whose Platonic authorship was disputed in antiquity, some of them for stated reasons, are: the "Hipparchus," "Alcibiades II.," and the "Epinomis," which last was ascribed to Philippus of Opus, the pupil and amanuensis of Plato, who edited the "Laws." (We must place in quite a different category the ineptitudes of certain Stoics and Neo-Platonists, who had the hardihood to deny Plato's authorship of works—the "Phædo" and the "Republic" among them—whose teaching they found unpalatable.) Now, since those librarians' catalogue-notes, as well as the other expressions of doubt which deserve any consideration, have come to our knowledge quite casually, we are unable to judge with any certainty of their extent; and the critic remains at liberty to include in his sceptical raids those works which do not labour under any stigma that we know of. Only he must proceed with the very greatest caution, for reasons which we have already stated. As regards the results which have been obtained in this direction, it seems less important to register the author's personal views than to sum up the

present position of the inquiry in a few words. Besides the minor writings already mentioned, there are three dialogues —the "Theages," the "Minos," and the "Clitophon"—none of them of any great length, which are regarded by the great majority of investigators as un-Platonic. The "Greater Hippias," "Alcibiades I.," and the "Ion" have not been condemned so emphatically; but here again the verdict is on the whole unfavourable. In all other instances the case for rejection is represented by not more than a limited number of specialists, and it is unnecessary to mention details at the present stage. The letters are the subject of a controversy which is not yet settled. Practically no one believes in the genuineness of them all; the bulk of them, however, in spite of the low esteem in which they were held a short time ago, have recently found champions of note.

3. Ancient tradition, from which we thus derive a certain amount of assistance in discussing problems of authenticity, leaves us almost entirely in the lurch when we come to the question of chronological order. Here we distinguish between absolute and relative dates. Of the former there is a most deplorable lack; in respect of the latter, though tradition yields next to nothing, a great deal of learned ingenuity has been expended, and finally, after many failures, certain positive results have been established, and certain methods discovered, the continued application of which promises a considerable harvest still to come. Of the data furnished by tradition there is but one—the position of the "Laws" as the terminal point of Plato's literary activity—which is both absolutely trustworthy and at the same time instructive in any great degree. When, on the other hand, we read in a late author, "The story goes that Plato wrote the 'Phædrus' first of all; the subject" (to a great extent erotic) "is particularly congenial to a youthful writer," we feel that the fact has grown out of the reason given for it. Nor is there any more weight in an anecdote reported by the same author and prefaced with "it is said," to the effect that when Plato read his "Lysis" aloud, Socrates exclaimed, "By Heracles! What a number of

untrue stories the young man has been telling about me!" A little more consideration, but not much, is due to a couple of dates which the majority of investigators regard as established by internal evidence. It is supposed that the composition of the "Meno" cannot have been anterior to 395, nor that of the "Symposium" to 384, because in the first-named dialogue there is mention of an incident which occurred in the earlier year, the bribing of Ismenias the Theban by the Persians; while the second dialogue alludes to a dispersion of the Arcadians by the Spartans which we cannot but identify with the destruction of Mantinea, effected in the later of the two years. The first of these dates possesses no great significance, for it would hardly occur to any one to place the "Meno" before the year in question, preceded as it must have been by the "Protagoras" and its kindred dialogues.

The comparative study of the language and matter of Plato's works has been prolific in a very different degree. Here, too, many mistakes have been made, and have betrayed themselves by the glaring contradictions to which they led; still the residue of definitively acquired results is very considerable and steadily increases. If at the close of one dialogue a problem is left unsolved, while in a second dialogue a solution is found for it; if a subject is treated playfully and tentatively in the one, with depth and mastery in the other; if in the one a foundation is laid, and in the other a superstructure reared upon it; if an investigation is here projected, and there actually entered upon; if dialogue A contains clearly anticipatory references to B, or D is obviously reminiscent of C;—in all such cases the relative order of the two works in question is settled beyond a doubt. At this point we can imagine the reader asking, with some surprise—But is not an author's advance, his progress towards perfection, the surest criterion for the chronological arrangement of his works? So it is, without a doubt. The inquiry we are considering has for its object the elucidation of this very progress, this development both of the thinker and of the author. But that object can only be attained by circuitous methods, for the very simple

reason that different people hold very different standards of perfection, both in matter and in style; in short, the method allows far too much liberty to subjective and arbitrary appreciations. Accordingly, this inquiry did not reach anything like a tranquil haven until the endeavour was made to obtain data of as objective and external a character as possible. We refer to linguistic criteria and the method of verbal statistics.

4. There is hardly a single author of ancient or modern times whose works have been subjected to so thorough-going a linguistic analysis as those of Plato. The labour which has been expended on things trifling in themselves may seem foolish or perverse to the outsider; but Jakob Grimm's "devotion to the little" has perhaps nowhere else been more richly rewarded. The results obtained can here only be indicated in outline.

Certain combinations of particles, meaning roughly "but how?" "but perhaps," "but yet," are entirely absent from the half of Plato's works. On the other hand, they occur with great frequency in his latest work, and with increasing frequency in a series of other writings of his. It has been rightly inferred that the first group belongs to his early period, the second to his advanced age. A precisely similar result has been obtained in another quarter, and quite independently, by an examination of his vocabulary. As we have already remarked by the way, certain dialogues contain an extraordinarily large number of words which are foreign to all the other writings of Plato. This group is connected, not only by the common tendency towards innovation, but by the common character of some of the innovations, with a work known to be the latest that Plato wrote—the "Laws." And there are other peculiarities of style, ranging from the most obvious to the most subtle, from the displacement of one particle of comparison by another, or a preferential use of special formulæ of affirmation and special superlatives, to the imponderabilia of syntax, word-arrangement, and accent—all indicating, in a manner which excludes chance, a surprisingly close relationship between the members of this group. That which gives us confidence

in these results is the astonishing agreement between many different investigations—an agreement which greatly preponderates over the undeniable discrepancies. That such discrepancies were bound to occur seems clear from the nature of the case; we will content ourselves here with mentioning a few of the chief sources of error. There are other distinctions, besides those of date, between the different works of an author; some, for example, may be more popular, others of a more strictly scientific character,—this distinction must affect the style, and may disturb the similarity natural to two works which are chronologically near to each other. Further, we have to take account of the possibility that the form in which a given work lies before us may be that of a revision, such as is demanded by a new edition, so that the inference from style to date of composition loses something of its cogency. Another work may occupy the position of a belated straggler: a thinker may have desired to complete a group of his youthful writings by a subsequent addition, which is thus connected with an earlier phase by its matter, and a later by its form. These are some of the possibilities which diminish the chronological applicability of verbal statistics, and there is an observed fact which merits mention along with them. The linguistic development of Plato, astonishing as was its extent, did not follow a uniform straight line. There are instances in which we find our author adopting a habit of language, letting it grow upon him, and then gradually dropping it. For all that, the method of verbal statistics may be held worthy of confidence, provided that the consequences to which it leads are, on the whole, consistent with each other, and do not contradict either the other criteria we have enumerated, the facts vouched for by reliable tradition, or the indications supplied by Plato himself. The method would stand condemned if it required us, for example, to place the "Laws" before the "Republic," to reverse the order of the trilogies constructed by Plato ("Republic"—"Timæus"—"Critias;" "Theætetus"—"Sophist"—"Statesman"), or to misinterpret clearly retrospective or anticipatory references. The case would

be worse still if the results of this method took away all possibility of forming some conception, commensurate with the general facts of humanity and the individual data, of the course of development followed by the thinker and the author. However, none of these unfavourable possibilities is realized. The determination of chronologically separate groups, and the distribution among these groups of the individual dialogues (with a few, but not unimportant, exceptions) are problems which may be regarded as finally solved ; the more ambitious task of settling the chronological order within all the groups cannot as yet be said to have been completed.

Building on these foundations, we propose to give an account of Plato's literary and philosophical development, for which purpose we shall divide his career into several stages. All his works of undoubted authenticity will be examined, more or less thoroughly, for the most part in the order of their composition. But this plan will not exclude occasional glances forwards and backwards ; when necessity arises, chronological proximity will yield to similarity of subject.

CHAPTER III.

PLATO AS AN INVESTIGATOR OF ETHICAL CONCEPTS.

1. EXACTLY sixty years ago a German student of antiquity, a man whose blunt and homely common sense was neither exalted nor impaired by over-refinement, gave expression to a truth which, to us at least, has always seemed self-obvious. It was then that Karl Friedrich Hermann asserted the existence of a purely Socratic period at the commencement of Plato's literary career. Nothing, indeed, could be more natural than that a devoted disciple, even if a genius, perhaps all the more because a genius, should set out in the first instance on paths already trodden by his master, before opening up and entering upon new ones adapted to his own slowly ripening individuality. What is at first a conjecture becomes a certainty as soon as we find among the works of the pupil, say Raphael or Plato, productions permeated throughout by the spirit or the manner of Perugino or Socrates. In the present case, internal evidence is supported by documentary testimony of the first rank. Aristotle, who during the last twenty years of Plato's life was among the most intimate of his disciples, reports that the doctrine of self-existent concepts or archetypes was an innovation of Plato, entirely foreign to Socrates. We at once judge it probable that in Plato's earliest writings this continuation of the Socratic doctrine of concepts did not appear—an hypothesis which is amply borne out by the facts. There are a number of Plato's works which contain no trace of the so-called doctrine of ideas. And since these very works exhibit the characteristics of the early

linguistic period, while in most of them the composition is marked by relative simplicity, there is much to commend and little to discountenance the assumption that in these we have before us the firstfruits of Plato's muse. It is true that K. F. Hermann was not the first to speak of a Socratic period, but his predecessors, in building on the foundation of truth thus won, had committed the error of ascribing to that period some of those very dialogues in which the doctrine of ideas is expounded.

In this first series of his writings Plato appears as an ethical conceptualist. That is to say, the subject-matter of his inquiry is Ethics, and the mode of it the investigation of concepts. In process of time this germ will undergo manifold differentiation. The living content of Ethics, besides its mere concepts, will be accorded greater and greater prominence. From moral philosophy the thinker will press on to the study of its psychological foundations. He will enter deeply into the problems of the soul's nature and destiny, not uninfluenced, in these matters, by the speculations of the Orphics and the Pythagoreans. On the other hand, for reasons which we have already noticed shortly (cf. p. 180, *sqq.*), and which we shall discuss more particularly later on, he came to see in concepts real essences, to the knowledge of which the soul has attained in a previous existence. A bridge will thus be constructed between a psychology tinged with religion and ontology or metaphysic. Again, the content of ethics will be widened; the thinker's gaze will pass on from the individual personality to the social and political organism. Lastly, after several important writings have dealt separately with different sections of the great whole, a mighty edifice will be raised, Plato's master-work, appearing from its name (the "Republic") to be dedicated to politics or extended ethics alone, but really housing, in its many chambers, all the parts of the Platonic system. But the attainment of this culminating height is followed by no cessation or interruption of activity; it rather marks the beginning of a new and laborious task, which may be shortly described as one of revision. The aging, but unwearied thinker subjects the whole of his intellectual

stock to a searching examination. That which survives the ordeal is retained and defended against objections—his own as well as those of other critics—nor is the defence wholly unvaried by episodes of aggression. The residue is partly remodelled, partly allowed to drop. An entirely new addition—the only one—is supplied by Plato's late-matured theory of Nature. This concluding phase is, chronologically, the best-authenticated of all. It may be regarded as definitely established that the "Sophist" and the "Statesman," the "Timæus," "Critias," and "Philebus," form, together with the "Laws," a single group, and that the latest in the series; while the middle group, as was to be expected, is less immune from boundary-disputes affecting its limits in both directions.

The first question to be considered is—When did Plato begin to write? Hardly before the death of Socrates, as we have already said, but certainly not long after that fateful event, and thenceforth his literary activity must have been fairly continuous. This last point is usually considered doubtful. It is generally assumed that at the most he took up the pen in the intervals between his travels, but that during the time occupied by them he lacked the necessary leisure and quiet. But this assumption has no justification. Change of residence and environment, if not too feverishly rapid, rather stimulates a productive nature than diminishes its output. We recall Descartes in the camp before Breda, or Goethe's sojourns in Rome. Plato needed no cumbrous outfit for the greater part of his work, certainly not for that part of it which is here in question. All he wanted was his head, his heart, and writing-materials. With so richly endowed a nature as his, head and heart must have been full to overflowing, even at that early period of his life. We find no difficulty, therefore, in the thought of Plato busy over his dialogues at Tarentum or Cyrene, in Egypt or Sicily; and we even think that the freer life abroad was more favourable to artistic creation than his position at the head of a complicated institution. We can imagine, too, how the sojourner among strangers must have rejoiced to conjure up before

his mind's eye the happy scenes of his youth and home, to transport himself once more to the shady avenues and the "semicircles" of the gymnasia, where the voice of Socrates—the voice that had stirred up a new life within him—first fell on his ear and sank into his soul.

2. Such are the scenes to which we shall shortly be introduced. But not more than an indefinite outline forms the setting of the dialogue which appears to have been the earliest composed, that is, if too great simplicity of structure and corresponding smallness of range may be taken as indications of an early date. We refer to the so-called "Lesser Hippias." The reader has already made the acquaintance (Vol. I. p. 431) of the teacher of youth who bore this name. He is here matched against Socrates; the third interlocutor, Eudicus, unknown to us from any other source, is an all but mute character in the dialogue. Hippias has just delivered, apparently within the gymnasium, a speech on Homer as an exhibition of rhetoric. The bulk of the audience has dispersed; Socrates remains behind, and, *à propos* of the speech, raises questions on the character of Homeric heroes. Hippias having declared Achilles to be the best, Nestor the wisest, and Ulysses the "wiliest," Socrates fastens on this last characteristic as a subject of cross-examination. To begin with, he drives Hippias to replace the ambiguous word "wily" by "false," and thus to contrast Ulysses with the true and straightforward Achilles. He then wrings from him the admission that the false do not lie from lack of ability or knowledge, but that their falseness rests on insight and understanding. A Socratic induction, setting out from the sophists' favourite art of arithmetic, leads to the result that the particular department in which any one excels is also that in which he is best able to deceive. Supposing, for example, that a bad arithmetician wished to impart false information on the product 3×700, he might conceivably tell the truth by mistake; a good one, whatever other number he might mention, would be careful to avoid 2100. But if we allow that the same department in which each person can best tell the truth is also that in which he can

lie best, the above antithesis between the characters of the two Homeric heroes cannot be maintained.

After a few humorous digressions, in which the "Iliad" itself is laid under contribution for proofs that even Achilles himself was not always at pains to be truthful; after several instances of somewhat exaggerated self-depreciation on the part of Socrates; and after a few scornful references to the unexampled many-sidedness of the sophist, who was shoemaker as well as poet, tailor as well as mnemonist (Vol. I. p. 431);—after these interludes, which, so to speak, provide a resting-place in the middle of the little dialogue, the discussion of the main question is resumed. Hippias had, rightly enough, explained those lapses from truth of Achilles which Socrates had mentioned, as involuntary. It was no intention to deceive, but the force of external circumstances, that had brought his actions into disaccord with his words; it was the desperate position of the army that had prevented him from withdrawing, as he had threatened. The question then arises—Which is the better man, he who errs voluntarily, or he who does so involuntarily?

Again Socrates enters the familiar path of induction. Of two runners, singers, or wrestlers, that one is always the better who runs slowly, sings false, is thrown by his adversary, only when he wishes; the worse of the two is he whose inferior performance is involuntary. The case is the same with the use of tools, including the organs of sense and motion. Every one would prefer to have eyes and feet with which he can see badly or walk lamely on purpose, rather than such as make dim vision or limping a necessity. The same is true of a rudder, a bow, of an animal and its soul, lastly of a human soul too, which is used as an instrument. The cavalier prefers a capable horse-soul, the commander a capable soldier-soul, to one which is incapable and therefore likely to err involuntarily. After additional illustrations, drawn from the practice of medicine, music, and so on, we come to the threshold of the strange question—Is not he who does wrong voluntarily better than he whose faults are involuntary?

The startled Hippias is asked whether justice is anything else than either a power, a kind of wisdom, or both together; in all three cases the affirmative answer turns out to be inevitable. In the first case the more capable or efficient soul is the juster, in the second the wiser soul, in the third the soul which combines both excellences; the less capable and the less wise soul is the more unjust. Now, it has been shown that in all departments the more capable and wise is the one who can produce good or evil, beauty or ugliness, at pleasure; while the failures of the less gifted are involuntary. Accordingly, the conclusion is drawn, guarded by an important reservation, that "the better and more capable soul, *when it does injustice*, will do so voluntarily, but the inferior soul involuntarily." And the reservation is repeated when the result is still further expanded by the substitution of the good man for the just man: "He therefore who errs and does unjust and disgraceful things voluntarily, *if such a man exists at all*, can be none other than the good man." Hippias declares that he cannot agree to this, and Socrates answers, "Nor I either." And yet the proposition necessarily follows from the preceding discussion. "As I have said before, I wander to and fro when I attempt these problems, and do not remain consistent with myself. With me, or any other amateur, perhaps there is nothing surprising in that. But when you trained intellects go astray too, it is a black look-out for us. It does away with our last hope of coming to you to be put right."

In this little dialogue we notice, not only the uncommon skill with which the argument is conducted to its conclusion, but also the easy grace with which the goal is concealed from view, and agreeable resting-places provided by the way. We are particularly struck by a peculiar species of wit, which occurs frequently in other works of Plato's youth. We refer to certain humorous turns drawn from the material of the dialogue itself, such as: "My dear Hippias, you are imitating Ulysses and deceiving me;" or (in a passage where the sophist is to be reminded of an admission which he would have preferred to be forgotten):

"You are not practising your art of memory just now." Turning to the content and the real purpose of the dialogue, we must first remind the reader of that Socratic doctrine which is already familiar to him, and which affirms that no man errs of his own free will (cf. p. 66). To this doctrine Plato held with unshakable firmness through all the changes and shiftings of his opinions. There are works belonging to all of his periods which bear sufficient witness to this. It is thus utterly incredible that he should have seriously called this doctrine in question, particularly in a dialogue obviously so near his Socratic starting-point, and that he should have combined with this doubt an assertion by which common-sense is defied no less than Socratism, to the effect that voluntary wrong-doing is better than involuntary. That Plato is not in earnest in all this is evident from the entirely conditional form in which he presents the argument on voluntary wrong-doing. Moreover, Socrates does not disguise his dissatisfaction with the conclusion, in spite of the necessity with which it appears to flow from the discussion leading up to it.

For the rest, the dialogue is unintelligible, except on the assumption—no very violent one in the case of a work by a beginner—that it was intended for a restricted circle of readers, the author's intellectual kin, all well acquainted with the fundamental Socratic doctrines. Such readers would easily see through the contradiction between the dialogue's apparent conclusion and their master's doctrine of will. The paradoxical thesis—that the voluntary evil-doer is superior to the involuntary—is supported by an induction which begins with lifeless instruments, goes on to our bodily organs of sense and motion, to the souls of animals and men of which we make use, and then passes, by an imperceptible transition, to our own souls and our own actions,—a transition which takes us from the region of means to that of ends, and then from the region of subordinate ends to the supreme end of life. That which is shown to hold good of those who purposely sing, row, or ride badly, is transferred in the end to the man who acts wrongly or unjustly. The error of such a transference may

be explained as follows: Every subordinate end may under circumstances be set aside in favour of another end which is recognized as being of superior worth: a man may miss the mark voluntarily; the good runner may desire to run slowly in order to spare his health; the man who is skilled in a game may play badly to win the favour of his opponent; the good rider may purposely sit his horse badly to warn his pupil against the like fault. Can we conclude from such instances as these that the just man may also, on occasion, wish to act unjustly?

Certainly not, for it is at this point that the quality of a man's will comes into play. He cannot, as we say, act contrary to his moral character when this is once fixed, nor can he, as the Socratics said, ever give up voluntarily that happiness or well-being which is the supreme aim of life, and with which justice is bound up in the most intimate manner: if he does so at all, it must be unintentionally and by mistake. The proposition—He who voluntarily chooses the worse shows a more complete mastery over the appropriate instruments, and is thus superior to the man who involuntarily chooses the worse or less effective means—loses its applicability, as may easily be seen, when we come to the last member of the series. Plato was well aware, we have no doubt, of the exact point at which the induction fails, and he set the reader the task of finding it out too. He himself "errs of his own free will." In this he had a twofold object. Firstly, he desired to provide new support for the Socratic doctrine of the involuntariness of all evil-doing by clearly stating the contradiction from which that doctrine alone, as he thought, can save us. On the other hand, he takes delight in showing how a moralist like Hippias, possessing ingenuity and eloquence, but unschooled in dialectics, may be driven into a corner and finally compelled to choose between an absurdity and a truth which shocks by its strangeness.

The correctness of this interpretation is also evidenced by the first part of the dialogue. The question here discussed relates to the identity of the truthful man and the liar; as proof of such identity the supposed untruthfulness of Achilles

is adduced. But the pointed character of the objections which Hippias is made to urge against this argument leaves no doubt on which side Plato himself stood. The purport of the discussion can hardly have been other than the following: The truthful man and the liar *would*, in fact, be the same, for each would be identical with the possessor of the fullest knowledge on the subject of discourse, *if* such knowledge, or, more generally, mastery over the instruments of action, were the only factor by which an action is determined. But this hypothetical identification, one which could easily be extended to a number of other instances (physicians, soldiers, and pyrotechnists are respectively the same as poisoners, bandits, and incendiaries!), is a *reductio ad absurdum* of the hypothesis, and we may be sure it is meant to be nothing else. An early hint is given to the reader of truths which clearly appear from the main part of the dialogue and its conclusion, the truths, namely, that action involves something more than mastery over means—the choice of ends; that these, for their part, are again means to the highest end, which is imposed by nature; that the moral character of the agent depends on his disposition, as we say, that is, from the Socratic point of view, on his insight into the foundations of that supreme end, well-being, or, to express the same thing differently, into the value of the good things of life. We shall very soon be brought back to this fundamental distinction, and we shall have a good deal to hear about it.

3. A dialogue of somewhat greater length, the "Laches," is more elaborately staged. As the purpose of this work may be determined more clearly and certainly than that of the "Lesser Hippias," we may take still less account of the decorative by-play, and proceed without further parley to extract the kernel from its enclosing husk. Just as, in the "Hippias," a display of oratory by a sophist, so in the "Laches," an exhibition of fighting by a fencing-master, supplies an occasion for discussion. Among the spectators have been Lysimachus and Melesias, the unrenowned sons of the illustrious statesmen Aristides and Thucydides. Their earnest desire is to bring up their

sons, who are named after their famous grandfathers, to be worthy of their inheritance; and they accordingly seek the counsel of the eminent generals Laches and Nicias on the educational value of the art of fence. Socrates, who is present, is also drawn into the discussion; Laches honours him for his courage in battle, and the two youths are fascinated by his powers of conversation. He at once takes the lead in the discussion, and turns it, as a matter of course, in the direction of fundamental questions. As the subject under consideration is a training in military excellence, he begins by pointing out the propriety of giving some thought to the end rather than the means; and the main problem now becomes the investigation of that part of the total excellence or virtue which is called courage. He next fastens on an attempted definition, which represents the first thoughts of his military interlocutors. Courage is steadfastness, a remaining at one's post in battle. He recalls the fact that many races win their greatest successes in war by simulated flight. The first case mentioned is that of the Scythian cavalry. Then the restrictions are removed, one by one. The Scythians are not alone in this respect, nor are the instances confined to cavalry. It was by a manœuvre of the same kind that the Lacedæmonian infantry turned the scale at Platæa. Standing firm in battle thus appears, with increasing clearness, to be too narrow a definition. Courage is in essence the same whether displayed by horse or foot, on land or sea. And more: there is another courage which is shown in facing diseases and privations of all kinds; other varieties, again, appear in the contest with pleasures and desires.

Under such pressure the search for the most general possible definition proceeds, with the result that courage is declared to be "a certain endurance of the soul." But whereas the former definition turned out to be too narrow, the reverse is now the case. For while courage is necessarily understood to be something noble and praiseworthy, endurance is seen to be not always deserving of these epithets. An attempt is therefore made to limit the concept; in order to deserve the name of courage,

endurance needs to be combined with wisdom or knowledge. But this at once raises a new question—Knowledge of what? Suppose two soldiers of equal endurance, which of them is to be accounted the more courageous: the one whose endurance rests on the knowledge that his isolation will not last long, that the enemy is inferior in quality and numbers to his own side, and is, moreover, in the less advantageous position? Or is he the braver who is in the reverse situation? Surely the latter—though his endurance is the less wise of the two. Similarly, he who endures, being equipped with a knowledge of the rider's art, or the bowman's, or the slinger's, is to be deemed less courageous than the man who shows equal endurance without such equipment. In an extreme case, to be sure, as when a diver without knowledge of his art hazards his life, endurance becomes foolhardiness, which is an ignoble quality and contrasts with courage, already acknowledged to be always noble and praiseworthy. The attempt, therefore, to distinguish between genuine and spurious courage on these lines has failed and must be abandoned; a new path must be struck out.

One of the interlocutors now recalls what is to him a familiar saying of Socrates, to the effect that every one is good in that in which he is wise. If, then, the courageous man is a good man, his courage must be a kind of wisdom. The question arises—What kind? Surely not the wisdom of the performer on the flute or lyre? Rather is it that wisdom which consists in the knowledge of what is dangerous and what not, in war as in other things. But an objection presents itself. Is it not the experts who, in every department, know most exactly the dangerous and the safe? In the case of diseases this knowledge belongs to the physician, in agriculture to the husbandman, and so forth. To this it is answered that the physician, for example, can only tell what promotes health and what aggravates disease; whether for a given patient sickness is more to be feared than health, whether it is better for him to get well again or to die, is a question beyond medicine. It is the same with those to whom is ascribed the most discerning eye for

"the signs of future events"—the soothsayers. They may know whether sickness, death, or impoverishment awaits a given person; they may foretell his victory or defeat; but which lot is the better for him, it is no more for the soothsayer to judge than any other man.

Thus the knowledge of what is dangerous and what safe claims a place to itself, apart from and above all kinds of special knowledge. In passing, courage, which is not allowed to be identical with fearlessness, is denied to animals, even the stoutest-hearted among them, to children, and to the unintelligent who are undismayed by danger because they are unaware of its existence. The discussion now returns to the main point, and soon reaches its goal. Dangers prove to be identical with future evils. The knowledge of them, and of their opposite goods, is now relieved of the limitation contained in the reference to the future, or rather, of all limitation of time whatever. Evils are evil and goods good, whether they are past, present, or future. Courage has thus been shown to be the same as the knowledge of goods and evils. Even this result does not remain unassailed. But the objections urged against it are not of a very searching order. The conclusion arrived at is certainly not marked out for rejection, but for subsequent completion. For that virtue in its essence and kernel is all of one kind, and identical with the knowledge of good and evil—this, too, is Socratic doctrine, and is not disputed at the close of the dialogue. The only question asked is how this result may be squared with the view which had been adopted previously, namely, that courage is one part of virtue among other parts. First, we notice that this view was not derived from argument, but was simply borrowed from current everyday opinion. It might seem, therefore, that the above objection came to no more than a recognition of the fact that Socratism and the general voice were here in disagreement, and that the commonly accepted division of virtue into distinguishable parts must be abandoned. But such an hypothesis hardly does justice to Plato's intention. The relation of the particular virtues to the wisdom which is their essence constituted a problem which was to

occupy his powers of thought for a long time yet, and not to be finally solved till he came to write the "Republic." Even at this early period the notion of courage is not for him exhausted in the practice of wisdom in regard to the evils of life. An indication of this is supplied by a passing mention of "pleasures and desires," which latter have their appropriate place assigned to them afterwards, when the problem comes to be solved. Whether Plato had already found the solution when he wrote the "Laches," and only held it in reserve, or whether he was still struggling with the difficulties of the problem, may seem doubtful; the second hypothesis, however, seems the more probable. On all other points Plato leaves the attentive reader, who can interpret his hints, in no doubt as to his meaning. Thus the conclusion, taken together with the preceding remarks on the unintelligent courage of animals, children, and fools, indicate clearly enough how he proposes to decide a question which was left unanswered at an earlier stage. It is not the greatness of the danger or the inadequacy of the means of defence, including serviceable kinds of special knowledge, that provides us with a measure of courage. In the quoted case of two soldiers who maintain their positions with equal endurance, the prize does not necessarily go to the one who is in the least favourable situation. For since courage is nothing else than a wise appreciation of the goods of life, manifested principally in face of threatened evils, that prize belongs only to him who possesses such wisdom in the fuller measure; of two soldiers, for example, that one will gain it who cherishes the clearer and surer conviction that death is preferable to a dishonoured life, to personal slavery, or the humiliation of his country.

4. The dialogue "Charmides" is charmingly dramatic and full of life. Its theme is *σωφροσύνη*, a virtue for which it would be hard to find an adequate name in any modern language. Discretion, moderation, temperance, modesty, self-control—each of these words contains a part, but none the whole of it. "Health of soul" is the etymological meaning of the Greek word, and this has been aptly rendered in recent times by the German *Heilsinnigkeit*, or healthy-

mindedness. But such a literal translation readily opens the door to misunderstandings. When we speak of healthy and wholesome natures, or the like, that which is dimly present to our minds by way of contrast is artificiality, lack of vigour and spontaneity, weakness or perversion of the primitive instincts and impulses of human nature. Not so with the Hellene. For him the great foe was excess; and health of the soul meant for him, principally, the subjugation of exuberant force to the normal measure, to a standard determined mainly by the interests of society as a whole. This quality was the chief ingredient in Greek virtue or excellence; it was the part which most often took the place of the whole, as in Xenophon's saying about Socrates: "Wisdom and virtue he did not distinguish" (p. 74). The concept fares much the same in the present little dialogue, which, possibly even more than the "Laches," is of the purely Socratic type.

The "Charmides" might almost be called a family conference, for the chief *dramatis personæ*, next to Socrates, are two near relations of Plato. Socrates has returned home after the battle at Potidæa (September, 432), and immediately proceeds to the palæstra of Taureas, where he meets his friends. He takes his seat among them, but not before Chærephon has greeted him with his customary enthusiasm, and demanded an account of his experiences. Critias is present, and bids Socrates heartily welcome. Soon Charmides is spied in the distance—a youth of bewitching beauty, on whom all eyes are at once riveted as on a statue. He is the cousin and the ward of Critias. Chærephon remarks that Charmides has so beautiful a figure that when his limbs are bared his face passes unnoticed, whereupon Socrates answers, "According to your description he must be altogether irresistible; let us hope he is not lacking in a certain something else—quite a trifle, I assure you." "And what might that be?" "A soul as well developed as his body." Critias sings the praises of his young kinsman's philosophic mind and poetical talent, which latter, as Socrates remarks in reply, is the common inheritance of the family from Solon downwards. He now

proposes to strip the soul of the beautiful youth. An occasion for addressing him is presented by a slight ailment from which Charmides has been suffering, a headache on rising, of which he has lately complained to Critias. On this pretext Charmides is bidden approach. His appearance produces a general commotion. All round the semicircle there is disturbance and confusion, due to the desire of each to have the new-comer for his neighbour, so that the two who sit at the ends are pushed from their places, and one of them sent sprawling. Socrates himself is disconcerted ; we must remember that the ancient Hellene was moved by the beauty of a boy in the same way as the modern man is by that of a girl or woman. Asked whether he knows a cure for headache, Socrates replies in the affirmative. The cure is a leaf ; but it cannot produce its effect without the aid of a charm. It belongs, furthermore, to the number of those remedies which act on more than one part of the body. He has but lately learnt the remedy at the camp in Thrace ; and the native physician who communicated it to him was of opinion that there are many maladies which the Greek physicians fail to subdue simply because they are ignorant that the soul needs treatment as well as the body. This Thracian, a disciple of Zalmoxis (who believed in immortality), affirmed that the well-being of the part depends on the health of the whole. The charms which act upon the soul are, according to him, salutary discourses producing σωφροσύνη. Socrates has sworn to the Thracian physician not to use his remedies except in conjunction ; and he cannot now undertake to treat the head until Charmides has submitted his soul to the process of "conjuration." Critias extols his young relation as possessing the virtue in question (which gives Socrates another occasion to sing the praises of the whole family, mother's side as well as father's), and Charmides is requested to say whether he is or is not endowed with the quality of σωφροσύνη. With modest blushes, which increase his beauty, he declares himself unable to answer the question. To say Yes would be self-praise ; to say No would be to set at naught the authority of his elder

kinsman. It is accordingly proposed to make common search for the answer, and the way is thus paved for a discussion of σωφροσύνη itself.

This discussion begins, naturally enough, with the narrowest and most external view of the subject. In the opinion of the young man, σωφροσύνη consists in quietness and calmness of behaviour, shown in walking in the streets, in speaking, and in all other actions. But Socrates has no difficulty in proving that quickness is better than slowness in activities both of the body and of the soul, in reading and writing, in running and wrestling, in leaping and playing the lyre, as also in learning, comprehension, and discussion. Quietness or slowness, therefore, cannot be identical with the quality under consideration, which is to be regarded as something altogether excellent and praiseworthy. After some hesitation, Charmides makes what to Plato's thinking is evidently a step in advance by remarking that σωφροσύνη is something which causes men to feel and show shame, that it is therefore the same as shame or modesty. This time he is encountered with a poetical quotation which does duty for a complete induction—the following line of the "Odyssey:"—

"Modesty, comrade unmeet for a man whom necessity pinches."

The confession is thus wrung from him that modesty is not always advantageous, is not always a good thing, which σωφροσύνη must be allowed to be. The confusion between good in the moral sense and good in the sense of mere utility ought not to trouble us, for, according to Socratic-Platonic principles, that which is morally good is at the same time that which universally brings profit or happiness. Pressed to continue his efforts, Charmides produces a third definition—a far more comprehensive one than the first two. According to this new definition, σωφροσύνη is "doing one's own business." Once more Socrates drives him into a corner. The schoolmaster writes other people's names as well as his own, the schoolboy writes the names of enemies as well as of friends—are they therefore deficient in σωφροσύνη? And could a state flourish in which it should

be forbidden to weave garments, build houses, or make utensils for others? An exchange of glances between Charmides and Critias, together with the growing uneasiness of the latter, leave no doubt that he is the real author of the definition, which Charmides began by describing as the work of some one else. Accordingly, the elder of the two cousins takes, as requested by Socrates, the place of the younger and weaker one in the conference, with which change the second and more difficult portion of the dialogue begins.

At first Critias defends his definition by the aid of subtle distinctions between the concepts expressed by such words as "doing," "making," "producing." Socrates had already guessed that by the phrase "one's own business" the good was intended. But, even with this proviso, he misses the element of knowledge in the definition. He asks Critias whether *σωφροσύνη* is or is not to be ascribed to those also who do good without knowing it? How is it, for example, with the physician, who usually, but not invariably, benefits both his patient and himself by the cure he effects? In the first case, the physician must be allowed a share in *σωφροσύνη*, in so far as he has done good. But, owing to his inability to distinguish between the abnormal cases and the exceptions which are their opposites, he himself never knows when he is exhibiting that quality and when not (compare the kindred argument in the "Laches"). Critias prefers to take back his words rather than admit that a man can have any part in *σωφροσύνη* without self-knowledge. Thus knowledge comes to occupy the central position in the discussion. The virtue for which search is being made is declared to be a sort of knowledge; more particularly it is contrasted with the special knowledge of the physician, the architect, and so forth, and affirmed to be "the science of other sciences and of itself," or, as it is presently put in somewhat altered form, "the knowledge of knowledge and of ignorance."

The definition thus propounded by Critias is now made the subject of a close and prolonged examination, the result of which may be summarized as follows: Such a knowledge

of knowledge is pronounced impossible. All knowledge, it is urged, equally with all sense-perception, must relate to an object, which must be other than itself. But the formula concerned is not therefore rejected unconditionally. A distinction is drawn between a knowing *of that which* one knows—a reflex, as it were, of the primary knowledge, which adds nothing to it, and which, by a repetition of the process, may be multiplied *ad infinitum*—and a knowledge *of the fact that* one knows or does not know a given thing. The latter is accepted as a possible element in knowledge, one which is favourable to all science by facilitating its acquisition and guarding its possession. Such recognition, indeed, could hardly be avoided in view of the important part played in the Socratic system by the distinction between real and apparent knowledge, by self-knowledge and criticism. But the content of σωφροσύνη, or even of virtue in general, cannot be supplied by a species of knowledge which is equally applicable to all sciences. For the most exact possible distinction between knowledge and ignorance, together with the resulting elimination of all seeming knowledge and seeming art, would not be enough to make our life happy. If there were no sham physicians, commanders, sea-captains, and so on, then we should certainly be in the best of positions as regards the preservation of our health and our safety in war or on sea. Faultless quality, too, would be guaranteed in all productions of the handicrafts, and the predictions of sooth-sayers would never deceive us. But well-being and happiness would still be not quite within our grasp. To gain happiness we need a special science with a special subject-matter, and this—the reader, with the "Laches" in his memory, has doubtless already guessed it—this subject-matter is none other than good and evil. "Wretch!" cries Socrates, addressing Critias, "why have you been leading me round in a circle for so long?" This phrase alone (there is an exact parallel to it in the "Gorgias") would be sufficient proof that we have here the true conclusion of the dialogue. Any doubt that may remain is removed by a comparison with the "Laches."

Just as in that dialogue, so here in the "Charmides," that which is placed in the brightest light is the art of life, which takes precedence over all the special arts subordinate to it, and is designated, as seems sufficiently clear, by the phrase, "Science of sciences." Still, this kind of knowledge is not explicitly identified with *σωφροσύνη*. Thus the dialogue runs its course, without, apparently, reaching any conclusion. Socrates roundly takes himself to task for his unskilfulness in the search, and expresses particular regret that he has not succeeded in curing Charmides. He comforts himself, however, with the hope that the virtuous youth will not need it, for he already possesses *σωφροσύνη*, and therefore happiness as well. Asked if it is so, Charmides can say neither Yes nor No. "How should I have knowledge of that thing, the essence of which even you profess your inability to determine? But I do not altogether agree with you, Socrates, and I think I have very great need of your 'conjuration.' Nor is there any reason why I should not be subjected by you to the process day by day, until you are able to declare I have had enough."

What is to be our verdict on the unsatisfactory conclusion of the dialogue? Is it to be set down entirely to the account of that first Platonic manner, in which the tangled threads of thought are not completely unravelled, but the reader is invited to take his share of mental labour? Not entirely, in our opinion. One important point, at least, receives sufficient illumination. The essential ground of all virtue, the well-spring of happiness, is found in the knowledge of the aims of life, in insight into goods and evils and their relative values. Here the "Charmides" is in exact agreement with its twin brother, the "Laches." And a further point of agreement is that in both dialogues the special virtue considered, *σωφροσύνη* in one, courage in the other, does not stand out with the same clearness and certainty. It is true that hints are thrown out for our guidance, but they rather serve to point out the direction in which the author's thought is travelling, than to tell of a goal which he has already reached. From this point of

view the definition of σωφροσύνη, as "doing one's own business," is not a little significant. For, in the "Republic" the highest importance is attached to the principle of the division of labour, the avoidance of all trespass on the rights and duties of others. Indeed, this principle is, in that later work, somewhat violently identified with the essence of justice. The further fact that the economic aspect of this same principle is touched upon in both dialogues makes their agreement still less like a chance coincidence. Lastly, the kernel of σωφροσύνη, which, in Plato's mind at least is closely akin to justice, is seen in the "Republic" to be the right delimitation of different spheres of activity—the due co-ordination, namely, of those parts of the soul which are respectively fitted for obedience and command. The conjecture can hardly be resisted that thoughts of this type had already begun to dawn upon Plato's mind when he wrote the "Charmides," but that they had not yet acquired the full clearness of maturity.

One remark more before we take our leave of this graceful dialogue. If we have used the words "knowledge," "science," "art," almost without distinction, we have but faithfully followed the example of our original. All knowledge is here regarded as the foundation upon which rests some kind of practice, the exercise of some art, though it is quite true that within this circle of ideas a distinction is occasionally recognized between the productive and the unproductive arts. The arts, for example, of arithmetic and land-surveying are contrasted, in this point, with the arts of the architect and the weaver.

CHAPTER IV.

PLATO AS AN INVESTIGATOR OF ETHICAL CONCEPTS—(*continued*).

1. THE summit and crown of this period of Plato's creative activity is to be found in the "Protagoras." In this work he exhibits the full measure of his literary powers. He overflows with humour, raillery, and exuberant invention. His dramatic and descriptive talent puts forth its most exquisite flowers. A crowded canvas is spread before our eyes, but the picture, with all its diversity, is held as in a frame by the strict unity of the thought.

The stage-setting of this dialogue, and not a few of its details, have already been treated by us on earlier occasions (Vol. I. 389, 438, *sqq.*, 586). It is enough for us here to trace the march of thought and to discuss the probable motive of the work. Protagoras has promised the young Hippocrates, who has been introduced to him by Socrates in the house of Callias, instruction in morals and politics; the discussion accordingly begins with the question whether such instruction is possible, or, in other words, whether virtue can be taught. Socrates doubts that possibility, and supports his doubts by two arguments. The Athenians, whom he "holds wise, as do all other Greeks," evidently do not believe that political virtue can be taught, and is the object of special professional knowledge. For in all those departments where they acknowledge such skill and trained experts who possess it, these experts alone have their ear and confidence; naval architects, for example, in ship-construction. In politics, on the other hand, the

Athenians draw no such distinctions ; the shoemaker and the smith, the shopkeeper and the carpenter,—all, in short, rich, poor, noble, or mean, are equally welcome to them as counsellors ; no one is required to furnish proof of education or training. Again, their most prominent statesmen, who procure for their own sons the most careful instruction in other matters, do not pass on to them their own special wisdom, either directly or through the medium of professional teachers ; on the contrary, they let them grow up almost wild, as is illustrated by examples taken from the family of Pericles. Any one who has the least familiarity with the views of Socrates will see at once that neither the doubts nor the reasons are seriously meant. Socrates did not really hold the Athenians wise, for he continually attacked their public conduct ; nor did their statesmen appear to him to be models of exalted intelligence. It was, indeed, for him matter of perpetual and indignant complaint that men in general, his own countrymen among them, recognized the need of systematic knowledge and professional training only in the smaller details of life, and not in their highest concerns. The objections here put in his mouth by Plato serve but to start a discussion which is intended to illustrate two things : the helplessness of even the greatest celebrity of the day when called on to face cross-examination by Socrates ; and, secondly, the inner connexion of the fundamental Socratic doctrines. Or perhaps we should rather combine the two, and speak of the contrast which Socratism, rigidly consistent, and therefore dialectically triumphant, presents to the contradictions of those current views on life of which the Sophists are the spokesmen and interpreters.

Protagoras sets himself to remove the doubts which have been raised, and for this purpose he first of all recites a myth and then delivers a speech of some length. These specimens of magnificent and impetuous oratory are masterpieces of Platonic art. Here, as elsewhere in his works, Plato employs a species of caricature which is common to him and the comic poet Aristophanes. He rivals or outbids the burlesqued author in his own peculiar excellences,

and at the same time gives great prominence to his defects, which he doubtless exaggerates. This refined species of caricature achieves two results instead of one. The original suffers both eclipse and disparagement, while in the double process the second part is made more effective by the first. For the real or apparent attempt to do justice by dispensing light as well as shadow lulls the suspicions of the reader and disarms criticism. In the present case the note of satire is so unobtrusive that even eminent scholars of the present day have allowed themselves to be deceived. George Grote says in round terms of the speech here put in the mouth of Protagoras, which he takes quite seriously, that he considers it "one of the best passages in Plato's works." The truth is that we have here a framework of confused and contradictory thought wrapped up in a covering of brilliant rhetoric, full of spirit and life. Both framework and covering, it is true, are Plato's own work, and the exact amount of resemblance between the original and the caricature is impossible to determine.

Stripped of its attractive but irrelevant accompaniments, and of all its rhetorical tinsel, the train of thought allotted to Protagoras is as follows: After the foundation of human society, it was ordained by Zeus that Hermes should distribute "justice and reverence" among *all* men. *For this reason* the Athenians, like others, rightly assume that every one has his share in political virtue. The correctness of this assumption is further evinced by the circumstance that when any one lacks (!) justice or any other part of political virtue, the world does not expect him to confess it, these qualities being regarded as indispensable. "And they say that all men ought to profess to be honest, whether they are so or not." Soon there follows another contradiction. His reference to a command of the Supreme God can only be a mythological expression of the assumption that men possess an instinctive or innate moral sense, from which fact it follows that the Athenians "rightly" believe every man to possess his share of virtue. And yet Protagoras immediately undertakes to "prove" that the

Athenians do not regard political virtue as a spontaneous gift of Nature, but as something to be acquired by practice and instruction. Otherwise they would have pitied, instead of punishing, the backward in virtue, just as they pity those whom Nature has treated shabbily in other respects. For punishment is meant to deter, and is inflicted for the sake of improvement or education.

Protagoras now addresses himself to the second objection raised by Socrates, that is, to the question why "superior men" do not impart their superiority to their sons. He launches out, first of all, into an eloquent description of the perversity with which these eminent men *would* be chargeable, if it were really true that, while expending the utmost care on their children's education in comparatively minor matters, they neglect those others on which their weal and woe, their life and death, depend. But however "wonderful" this inconsistency may be, Plato and Socrates none the less believed it to be a reality, and their pained surprise at it and similar inconsistencies was the main motive of their whole ethical thought. In the present passage the place of an explanation is taken by a lively and widely discursive description of the influence in the direction of morality which is exercised at all stages of life and from all sides on every member of a civic society. At the same time, no small efficiency is ascribed to school-instruction, in connexion with which the following remark occurs: "And this is done by those who can do most; now those who can do most are the rich, and their sons begin school at the earliest age and leave it at the latest." One is moved to ask, with some surprise, whether the level of wealth and the level of morality do in reality generally agree. The task of explaining the abnormal fact—that many good men have bad sons—is not approached till late in the speech, and then, as it would seem, with some little reluctance. The solution finally proposed is as follows: When so much is done, by so many people, for so long time together, for the development of a particular quality, the amount finally produced depends, not on the quantity of instruction received, but on natural aptitude

alone. If, for example, flute-playing had the same importance for life in a community as justice has; if, in consequence, there were, an equally general and persistent competition in making men good flute-players; then we should not find the sons of the best musicians becoming the best in their turn, but simply those whose gift for music was the greatest. It is as clear as daylight that this argument leaves practically no room for teachers of morality and their work. Naturally Protagoras does not accept a conclusion so disastrous for a professional teacher of virtue. But he escapes it, not by any argument drawn from the nature of the case, but by a full-sounding phrase: "If there be any of us who can surpass the rest, by however little, in the promotion of virtue, that is something to be thankful for. I myself, as I believe, am such a man, and I contribute more than others towards . . ." and so on.

At last the torrent of sonorous rhetoric ceases to flow, and Protagoras is "really silent." Socrates, who has been listening "like one bewitched," and now only recovers his composure by degrees, expresses himself as all but satisfied. There is only one small matter which still troubles him—observe the thin end of the wedge. Protagoras has lumped together "reverence and justice" in speaking of their distribution by Hermes, and in other parts of his speech he has associated justice with piety and other virtues. Socrates would now like to know his opinion on the unity of virtue. Are the different parts of virtue related to each other as the different parts—eyes, nose, mouth—of a face? Or are they like the parts of a lump of gold? In other words, are they homogeneous or heterogeneous? Can they be possessed separately? or does a man acquire all parts simultaneously as soon as he becomes master of one? The latter, be it observed, is the Socratic view; it is only because all virtue consists in wisdom (and is therefore one) that it can be taught. Plato takes no little pleasure in making Protagoras maintain the possibility of teaching virtue, while denying the grounds on which that possibility rests. For the sophist

answers, as one who is no follower of Socrates must answer; he takes his stand on the common judgment which knows nothing of that unity of all virtue. On the contrary, there are, in his opinion, "many who are brave but unjust, and many others who are just but not wise."

The arguments which Socrates opposes to this view are at first surprisingly weak. He asks whether justice is just; and Protagoras dares not say No, lest he should be obliged to say it is unjust. A precisely similar question is asked about piety, and is answered in a similar manner. Socrates continues his questions; and, through fear of being obliged to say that justice is impious or piety unjust, Protagoras is led to affirm the piety of justice and justice of piety. The two virtues thus appear to be joined by a bond which excludes the possibility of their being essentially different. Every one must at least feel the fallacious character of the argument. To bring it out clearly, we need only reflect that "pious" and "just" are predicates which cannot be affirmed, in any intelligible sense, of every subject. Even among human beings there are some to whom they are not applicable—those, for example, who are not responsible for their actions; while their application is still more restricted when we come to existences in general, and most of all in the case of abstractions such as the virtues. The epithets "pious" and "just" are attached, in the first place, to particular dispositions of human minds, then to the actions which spring from these dispositions, to the persons who possess them, and, lastly, to modes of action and feeling. There is as little sense in saying that justice is just or piety pious as there is in saying that roundness is round or redness red. The denial of such an assertion by no means implies that we assign the predicate "unjust" to justice, or that of "impious" to piety, any more than in refusing the predicate "just" to an infant or a tree, a flower or a stone, we mean to affirm that any one of them is unjust. Of course, men have always been only too ready to smuggle into the simple denial of a statement the affirmation of its opposite—to pass lightly from the contradictory negative to that which

is merely contrary. Again, it is anything but obvious that the predicate "pious" belongs to justice, or *vice versâ*. In fact, to speak of piety as just seems absolutely meaningless. And if a somewhat lax use of the concept "piety" enables the believer in God to call justice pious, in the sense of being pleasing to God, this is not enough to justify even the identification of justice with God-pleasing, not to speak of anything more.

The second fallacy which we have to note in this connexion is of a still more rudimentary character. The essential sameness of wisdom and σωφροσύνη is supposed to be evinced by the fact that the opposites of "folly" both in the intellectual and in the moral sense, are expressed by a single Greek word—ἀφροσύνη. The proof is clinched by an appeal to the axiom that no concept can have more than one opposite. It is needless to say that in this passage the want of sharp discrimination between the different meanings of a word has produced a proof which falls to the ground as soon as we realize the ambiguity. Possibly Plato might have learnt from Prodicus the art of making such useful distinctions, if he had regarded the "wisdom" of that teacher with a little less contempt. Here, for all his genius, he is guilty of precisely that fallacy which is called "equivocation" in the technical language of logic. We admit that Plato now and then uses weak and even fallacious arguments consciously; but of this practice, in our judgment, the present passage is not an instance. For, in what follows, there is no hint by which the reader might be warned either that a fallacy has been employed in sport, or that arguments of slender weight have been stationed, like sharpshooters, in advance of more serious proofs. No such hint, we say, is offered. On the contrary, the perplexity of Protagoras is represented as fully justified, and marks the entrance of the dialogue upon its critical stage.

2. Pressed hard in dialectic, Protagoras at last takes refuge in the pleasant fields of poetry. That is to say, he ceases to give short and precise answers; he loses himself in digressions, and threatens to relapse into that eloquence

by which Socrates had once before been reminded of the long-sustained note given out by metal vessels in response to a short, sharp blow. Socrates now declares himself unable to retain his opponent's answers in his memory. He is forgetful, he says, and must beg Protagoras to take account of his infirmity. The stronger must always adapt himself to the weaker, if the two are to work in harness. If he and Crison of Himera, the swiftest runner of the day, were required to run in step together, that could only be done by Crison reducing his speed, not by the opposite method. The dialogue, and with it the feast of reason which the onlookers are enjoying, threatens to come to an untimely end. Hereupon Callias, in whose house the scene is laid, Critias, and Alcibiades, lastly also Prodicus and Hippias, offer their mediation ; and the occasion is taken to sketch the interveners in a few rapid strokes, in which the two sophists are somewhat severely caricatured. At length an exchange of *rôles* is agreed upon: Protagoras is to ask questions, and Socrates is to answer them. The former is thus enabled to leave the thorny field of ethical concepts, and turn his attention to the interpretation and criticism of poetry—an exercise which he regards as "the principal part of education." With a touch of that schoolmasterly spirit which we have already noticed in him (cf. Vol. I. pp. 441, *sqq.*, 458), he proposes to examine some passages from a poem of Simonides as to their "correctness" or "incorrectness."

What follows may be described, in a phrase coined by Plato elsewhere, as a "laborious pastime." By an abuse of ingenuity, one speaker finds stumbling-blocks in the poem under discussion, and the other endeavours to remove them by subtle quibblings. Simonides had, in the first place, pronounced it "hard" for any one "to become truly good, four-square in hand and foot and mind, a work of faultless art." And yet, further on in the same poem, he had spoken of the saying of Pittacus, "It is hard to be good," as inadequate, on the ground that "only a god can have part in such a privilege," while human character is ever the plaything of fate. He therefore renounces all

pursuit of "unattainable, spotless perfection," and professes himself ready to "love and honour" every one "who never willingly does anything base; but against Necessity the gods themselves fight in vain." The case is much as if the poet, improving upon himself, had corrected his first assertion: "It is hard to be good," by exclaiming, "But what am I saying? It is not hard; it is a sheer impossibility to reach so high a goal."

Plato, speaking through the mouth of Socrates, now engages in what was evidently at that time a favourite intellectual pastime. In doing so he employs, as earlier in the dialogue, that style of caricature in which the original is outshone. Here the butt is not so much Protagoras, whose criticism of poetry was rather marked by a leaning towards pedantry, as Hippias and Prodicus. The explanation proposed by Socrates is violent, linguistically speaking, in the highest degree; moreover, Plato is perfectly well aware that it is so. Accordingly, to provide against that attempt being taken seriously, he makes Socrates begin with the pleasant fiction that the Cretans and Spartans, who of all Greeks were the most hostile to culture and innovation, were in reality the sophists' warmest friends, but that the sophists of those countries kept their wisdom concealed. Protagoras, in the beginning of the dialogue, had said much the same of his predecessors, as he called them—Homer, Hesiod, Orpheus, and the others. Socrates further explains that the Lacedæmonians instituted their "expulsions of aliens" for no other purpose than that they might enjoy the society of the sophists undisturbed. And there are other jests of the same kind. Thus the prologue warns us to expect a burlesque, and there is an epilogue which expresses with unvarnished plainness the view that all such virtuosity is arbitrary and sterile. Contradictory explanations, he says, can be maintained with equal show of reason, but true certainty can never be reached, for it is impossible to go to the poets themselves and obtain authoritative decisions. The main purpose of this interlude, which is doubtless also intended for the recreation and entertainment of the reader, is obvious enough,

and may be set out as follows: Socrates extracts out of the poem by Simonides a maxim to the effect that "it is hard to become good; impossible to remain so permanently." But he proceeds as though his own original, and even paradoxical, thesis, "No man errs of his own free will," were the common property of "all wise men," and, among them, of the Cean poet, who "was not so uneducated as to believe" that any one ever did evil voluntarily. Now, the two thoughts are in the most glaring contradiction with each other. For to say that no one errs voluntarily is merely to give expression to the view that every fault is the result of an error, and that all right-doing is the consequence of correct thinking. But the maxim attributed to Simonides, according to which virtue is hard to gain and impossible to keep, is the exact opposite to the theory of Socrates; for the knowledge which he regarded as the foundation of all virtue might be hard of acquisition, but once gained, could never be lost. The Socratic doctrine—that the intellect alone determines action—leads, by a necessary development, to the proposition, "Virtue rests on knowledge; it can, therefore, be taught, but cannot be lost." With this thesis there is here conjoined, indirectly, the antithesis, "Virtue can be lost; it cannot therefore be taught, and hence does not rest on knowledge." Plato represents the great sophist and his famous companions as receiving this self-contradictory explanation with hearty approval, and thus once more throws into relief the confusion and inconsistency of thought which marked the most eminent writers and teachers of the age, and from which Socrates alone was free. Once more, too, the aim of exalting Socrates above all the notabilities of the day is accompanied by another and nobler aim—that of presenting the Socratic ethics as a complete and well-rounded system.

But Plato is not satisfied with hints, such as those only can understand who are familiar with the spirit of Socratism. The progress of the dialogue supplies him with an occasion to exhibit the inner connexion of those doctrines in a clearer light. For Socrates resumes the discussion on the unity of

virtue as soon as Protagoras, pacified by a few expressions of respect, has reconciled himself once more to the part of answerer. He begins with the admission that there is a certain affinity between the other parts of virtue, but not between them and courage. There is no lack, he contends, of examples which show that a man may be unintelligent, unjust, dissolute, irreligious, and yet at the same time courageous. Socrates sets about proving that even courage —real courage, as distinguished from mere recklessness— is coupled with knowledge. The demonstration, however, proceeds, in the first instance, by the defective method already known to us from the "Laches," the unsatisfactory character of which is here again indicated by Plato in the clearest possible manner. The knowledge which is first spoken of is not that of ends, but that of means. It is contended that the most skillful diver, horseman, or foot-soldier is always also the most courageous. It is only the accompanying knowledge that makes their confidence something praiseworthy, constitutes it the virtue which we name courage. To this argument Plato represents Protagoras as answering, with equal point and seriousness, that such a union of confidence and knowledge certainly does increase efficiency, but only in the same way as does the combination of strength and knowledge which is possessed, for example, by the trained wrestler. But just as the second instance gives us no right to identify knowledge with bodily strength, no more does the first justify us in regarding it as the same as confidence, or the highest stage of confidence—courage. In this part of the discussion Protagoras displays a somewhat surprising degree of logical training. He knows that not every judgment can be converted *simpliciter;* that the proposition, "The courageous are confident," cannot without more ado be converted into "The confident are courageous." (Simple conversion is illegitimate where the subject has a narrower extension than the predicate; thus: "All negroes are men," but not "All men are negroes.") One might almost conjecture that, possibly in his "Antilogies," the sophist had given expression to some of the elementary truths of logic, and that

Plato has here worked with a twofold object. He desires both to correct, through the mouth of Protagoras, the above-mentioned misapprehension of Socrates' doctrine of the unity of wisdom and courage—a misapprehension which seems to have originated in the circle of disciples—and at the same time to assign to its source, in broadly allusive style, a species of wisdom of whose profundity he had no very great opinion.

At this point the problem is dropped, to reappear presently in a more fundamental shape. The dialogue enters on its final phase, in which Socrates combats the opinion of "the many" that man errs voluntarily; that he knows the good, but does not do it because he is overpowered by pleasure or other emotions (such as anger, fear, love, sorrow). Socrates proposes to prove the untenable character of the ordinary view and to establish the actual supremacy of the intellect. Protagoras cordially assents. The prospect is held out that in the course of the inquiry the relation of courage to the other parts of virtue will become plain. The discussion takes the form of a conversation with the many. Their assumption that a man often knows evil as evil and yet does it, is characterized as ridiculous. Every one—this is the gist of the proof—desires what is best for himself; he further identifies good with pleasure, evil with pain, and accordingly strives always after a maximum of pleasure and a minimum of pain; he therefore avoids pleasure only when it is the source of still greater pain, and only chooses pain when a greater amount of pleasure results from it. The being overcome by pleasures means in reality nothing else than that the smaller but nearer pleasure is preferred to the greater and more remote, the reason of which preference is that nearness magnifies goods to the mind just as it does objects to the eye. In such cases our judgment is deceived. Errors of this kind are avoided by him who knows how to count, to measure, to weigh correctly in questions of pleasure and pain. The right conduct of life is thus reduced in the last resort to a species of calculus, or mensuration, that is, to some kind of wisdom or knowledge. Its opposite, on the

other hand, the supposed condition of being overcome by pleasure or emotion, turns out, now the mask is stripped from it, to be nothing but ignorance, and indeed the greatest and most fatal ignorance of all.

Here follows the application to the special case of courage. If "it is not in human nature" to go in quest of evils which one has recognized as such, but, at the most, to choose the lesser of two evils when there is no other escape, then the common conception of courage and cowardice cannot be right. It is said, possibly, that cowards go where there is "safety," the courageous where there is "danger." But if danger is the same thing as an evil in prospect, how can such a statement be accorded with the conviction, which has just forced itself upon us, that no one will ever choose an evil which he knows to be such? How is it, for example, with war? Is it noble or base to go to battle? If it is noble or praiseworthy, as is conceded, then it must necessarily be also good or useful. If, then, cowards avoid going to battle, which is something noble and good, there can be no other reason than their ignorance, that is—as we may add in completion—their defective knowledge of the relative values of goods such as freedom and life (compare our discussion of the "Laches"). The opposite of cowardice can, therefore, be only wisdom or true knowlege. Thus courage, to which Protagoras wished to assign a place apart, is triumphantly reduced to wisdom, like the other virtues.

Towards the close of the dialogue Socrates declares that throughout the discussion his sole aim has been to discover what virtue really is, and what is the truth about it. The result arrived at is not stated with dogmatic precison, but its nature is indicated clearly enough. Socrates first of all expresses his surprise at the exchange of *rôles* which has been effected between himself and Protagoras He himself had begun by denying that virtue could be taught; now, however, he has reduced all the parts of it to knowledge, after which step the proof that it can be taught first begins to be feasible. For if virtue were something different from knowledge, as Protagoras has

been endeavouring to show, it is clear that the teaching of it would be an impossibility. But now that virtue has been revealed as knowledge, it would be strange if it could not be taught. That it cannot, is a thesis which ought really to be maintained by Protagoras, who began by assuming that it can, while afterwards he did his best to represent it as anything else rather than a kind of knowledge. Both have failed in point of forethought; Epimetheus (afterthought) has overthrown them both; and thus the dialogue takes a conciliatory turn with a gracefully humorous reminiscence of the sophist's myth. The adversaries part as good friends who hope to meet again and help each other in the pursuit of truth. Plato evidently regards as complete the dialectic reverse suffered by the representative of ordinary views of life and the world, and he exploits, for the purpose of commending Socratic doctrine, such reputation as Protagoras still enjoyed at the moment of writing. For he makes him predict the future renown of his opponent, to whose earnestness and skill he accords "ungrudging" and cordial praise.

3. On the purpose of the dialogue little remains to be said. It is partly concerned with the dialectic superiority of Socrates, but at the same time, as we have already had occasion to observe, the inner connexions of his teaching are not unregarded. The initiated are helped to a clearer perception of them; while the uninitiated are encouraged to attempt, under Plato's guidance, the task of arranging, in a coherent and articulate system, what is presented to them in the form of isolated and dispersed fragments of doctrine. In this aspect the "Protagoras" reminds us of the *carmina fracta*, that is, disjointed portions of verse, the piecing together of which used to be a favourite school-exercise, or of the problem presented by an ancient ruin to the archæologist who desires to restore the dislocated members of the edifice to their original situations. The more attentive reader, that is to say, is introduced to a train of thought of which the successive stages, already in part indicated by us, may be summarized as follows: Virtue is inalienable because it can be taught; it possesses this

capacity of being taught, on the one hand, and organic unity on the other, because it rests entirely on knowledge ; it rests solely and entirely on knowledge—here we have the cardinal thought, the keystone of the arch—because the noble or praiseworthy, which forms its content, is at the same time the good or useful, which the agent, so far as he is not the victim of error, always chooses and prefers, because it is, in the last resort, that which brings pleasure to himself.

These words, "in the last resort," may perhaps give pause, and rightly so, to more than one reflecting reader of these pages. The identification of virtue with happiness is an heirloom from Socrates which continually recurs in Plato's works. Less frequent, but by no means unexampled, is the reduction of happiness to pleasurable sensations. Hence arises the possibility of constructing a bridge between the content of virtue and that of pleasure. But such a work of conciliation requires as a basis the proof, either that virtue, whatever be the motive for which it is sought, always yields the greatest pleasure, or that the pursuit of the greatest possible amount of pleasure can only be successful when it follows the paths of virtue. What strikes us in the present passage is not merely that no such demonstration is supplied, but that the necessity of one is not so much as hinted at. But it would only make matters worse to dismiss the argument as not seriously meant, intimately connected as it is with such characteristic and far-reaching articles of the Socratic and Platonic faith as the involuntariness of all error and the foundation of all right-doing on knowledge. There is, however, a parallel passage which illuminates the point at issue and ends our perplexity.

The reader of the Platonic "Laws" is reminded of the "Protagoras" by a passage in the fifth book, and that in a manner which may well cause him surprise and some little emotion. It is affecting to observe how the thinker, after the lapse of half a century, is still engaged, with unabated intensity of devotion, upon the same problems which occupied his youth. Here we meet once more with the

same hedonistic point of view, as we may shortly term it; and the manner of its expression closely resembles that employed at the close of the "Protagoras." But this time the omission which we noticed before does not recur; there is present also a background of idealism, the place of which, in the "Protagoras," is taken by a reservation—by the expression, that is to say, of a doubt as to whether pain and pleasure do really exhaust the whole of what we mean by good and evil. At this stage, in the work of his old age, Plato turns abruptly away from ideals of life and things divine, with the words, "But we have not *yet* spoken of these things from the human standpoint. This, however, we must now do, for it is to men, not gods, that we address ourselves. By human concerns we mean pleasures and pains and the desires connected with them; to these things all mortal creatures cleave with passionate striving." There follows, just as in the earlier work, the exposition of a species of moral mensuration or arithmetic. Pleasures and pains are compared in respect of their "number, extent, and intensity. We choose the lesser pain, if coupled with a greater pleasure, but not the lesser pleasure, if coupled with a greater pain;" this time, too, account is taken of the "neutral state, which we are very willing to choose instead of pain, but not instead of pleasure." Up to this point, Plato's procedure is exactly the same in both works. He states the facts of human nature; he points out conditions which are valid for all volition without exception—note the frequent and strongly emphatic use, in the "Protagoras" as well as the "Laws," of the word "men." But while no attempt is made, in the closing portion of the first-named dialogue, to set in a clear light the connexion between the natural foundation of morality and the system of precepts built upon it, this omission is repaired in the "Laws." A line of argument is here entered upon, the express purpose of which is to prove that "the noblest life wins for us also that prize on which all our hearts are set—the preponderance of joys over sorrows." There is a detailed exposition of the advantages which "the reasonable, courageous, temperate, and healthy life" has over the life which is

"unreasonable, cowardly, dissolute, and diseased." Finally, the life which is guided by virtue is praised as the one which is "happier both in detail and in gross." The absence of this intermediary matter from the "Protagoras" may perhaps be partly set to the account of the author's youth, and his as yet incomplete mastery of his craft. Partly, also, our surprise on this head is lost in a more general cause for wonder. How is it, we may ask, that in the whole series of his youthful works, Plato is so niggardly with sentiment and emotion, and, even in passages where he touches upon the highest human concerns, gives us only cold outlines, to which we must add the colouring ourselves? He speaks to us again and again of the "good," but seldom or never tells us what that is in which the good consists. In treating of the "Laches" we thought it necessary to repair this omission. We spoke of the advantages of freedom over slavery, of the saving one's country over the permitting its destruction, of honour over dishonour. In so doing we believe we rightly supplemented Plato's thought. But the deficiency was there to be supplemented. In these dialogues he avoids, as if of set purpose, all that goes beyond the discussion of concepts. Can it be that the quondam poet guards himself with jealous care from all fervour of emotion as the greatest danger to which an incipient philosopher is exposed? Or is it repugnant to the youth to assume the solemn mien of the ethical preacher? Or, lastly, has the pupil resolved to tread nowhere but in the footsteps of his master, whose province was the criticism of concepts and the exposure of fallacies? Is it for this reason that he so carefully shuns all exhortation—at once the domain and badge of those sophists from whom he is anxious to distinguish himself? Did he regard dialectic subtlety as something superior and refined (*κομψόν*), at the same time disdaining the exhortatory style as commonplace and a little vulgar (*φορτικόν*)? Probably it was a mixture of all these motives that stamped the firstfruits of Plato's muse with their character of reserve—a quality nowhere more marked than in the closing portion of the "Protagoras," where such words as "happiness," "blessedness,"

and all others of high and solemn sound will be sought for in vain.

This attitude of reserve was not to be maintained or long. It soon disappeared, and for ever. At the same time, that sunny light-heartedness, by which the first series of Plato's works is irradiated, suffered at least temporary eclipse. The strains that now meet our ear are deeper, stronger, and more moving than those we have hitherto heard. We stand at the portal of the magnificent edifice named "Gorgias."

CHAPTER V.

PLATO'S "GORGIAS."

1. THE scenery of the "Gorgias" is marked by the same indefiniteness of outline as that of the "Hippias." The Sicilian rhetorician, like the Elian teacher of wisdom, has just been delivering an address to a numerous auditory in some place of public resort—probably in the hall of a gymnasium. Socrates arrives late, accompanied by his faithful Chærephon. He desires to put a question to Gorgias, which the latter can the less decline to answer as he has a moment ago publicly announced his readiness to reply to every questioner.

The point at issue is nothing less than the nature and essence of Rhetoric. Before long a dialogue is in progress, and in the course of it Socrates displays his usual acumen and subtlety, while the rhetorician appears as a genuine lover of truth, to whose nature all disputatiousness is foreign. After the opening sentences, the rhetorician Polus of Agrigentum, a young man and full of youthful enthusiasm, takes upon himself to enter the lists in place of the master, who is already tired. He embarks upon a eulogy of his art; and his speech, though short, provokes amusement by its strongly marked Gorgianic style. But as it is the nature of rhetoric, not its value, which is in question, Gorgias himself, at the request of Socrates, re-enters the discussion—which we reproduce, with occasional comments. The first and most general definitions—"knowledge of discourse," "artificer of persuasion"—having proved too comprehensive, a process of narrowing down begins, which

leads to the result that rhetoric is *the art of persuasion, as exercised in law-courts and popular assemblies, in respect of questions touching justice and injustice as well as others.* A distinction is then drawn between two kinds of persuasion: one of them produces belief without knowledge; the other produces knowledge as well. It is agreed that the orator does not impart knowledge in the true sense of the word, for the reason that it is a sheer impossibility to enlighten a mass-meeting on such great subjects as justice and injustice, in a short space of time. (No notice is here taken of the distinction between the exposition of a complete system of law, whether positive or ideal, and that application of established legal maxims to particular cases which is common in legal practice, and is not necessarily a lengthy process.) It is pointed out, next, that it is the "orators," Themistocles and Pericles, for example, and not the "master workmen," with their special knowledge, who have decided, and still decide, such matters as the building of fortifications or the construction of docks. (Here the distinction is neglected between matters of principle, such as depend on political considerations, and matters of detail; nor is any notice taken of the fact that Themistocles and Pericles were not mere orators, but possessed a most competent knowledge of statecraft.) Gorgias now boasts of the great influence which the power of speech enables him to exercise over specialists of all kinds and over their clients: for example, he is sometimes more successful than his brother Herodicus in prevailing upon the latter's patients to follow the directions of their physician. From all this the conclusion is drawn that *the orator, without possessing knowledge, appears to the ignorant to possess it.* In this connexion the question is asked whether the ability to dispense with knowledge, which is thus claimed for the orator, extends to questions touching the just and the unjust. Gorgias will not admit this for a moment. The pupil who has not acquired such knowledge from previous instruction receives it from him, the teacher; and in fact the school of rhetoric was, in that period, regarded as a place of general education, and of preparation for public life. Socrates takes note

of this declaration, and turns it against Gorgias. The latter had previously endeavoured to clear rhetoric from the reproach which, on the ethical side, so often attaches to the application of it. He had spoken of the *abuse* of rhetoric, for which, as he said, the teacher could no more be held responsible than could a fencing-master whose pupil should employ the skill imparted to him for the purpose of committing parricide (cf. Vol. I. p. 471). Here Socrates claims to detect a contradiction. If the teacher of rhetoric instructs his pupil on justice and injustice, as Gorgias now contends, then, Socrates urges, there can be no possibility, on the pupil's side, of misusing rhetoric. For the knowledge of the good includes—according to the hypothesis of Socratism, be it observed, not otherwise—both the will to do good and the actual doing of it; otherwise what is here said of the possible misuse of the art lacks justification.

2. Here Polus rushes in to the aid of his master, and contends that the apparent contradiction is merely the result of the false shame which prevented Gorgias from admitting the superfluousness of knowledge for the orator in questions of justice and injustice as well as others. This interposition, apart from its ill-natured accompaniment, seems to us to be justified, if only we distinguish, in the case of one who uses the art of speech as an instrument of evil-doing, between the orator and the man. Polus here pleads for the purely formal character of rhetoric, exactly as we moderns do, and as Aristotle did, who recognized that the power of speech, like other valuable possessions—bodily strength, health, riches, the general's art—may be used both rightly and wrongly (cf. Vol. I. p. 472). That Plato should be acquainted with this eminently rational view of the matter, that he should express it by the mouth of Polus, as previously by that of Gorgias, and that he should yet go on to combat it, is perhaps a little surprising, all the more so when we consider the nature of the invectives which he proceeds to hurl against rhetoric. These invectives, be it observed, are directed against rhetoric as a whole, not against that part of it which may be succinctly

described as a collection of barristers' tricks, and which Aristotle, nevertheless, did not disdain to teach, under the assumption that only what he, not very intelligibly, calls the "correct" use would be made of it. Rhetoric, Socrates affirms, is the mere semblance of an art, a species of "flattery," akin to the arts of dress and of cookery (more correctly, that of preparing tempting dishes). Like these, and like sophistic, it aims only at pleasure, and stands in sharp contrast to those arts whose end is the good—gymnastics and medicine in the physical sphere, legislation and the administration of justice in the moral. Such is the tenor of the condemnation which, in vehement language, is pronounced against rhetoric, which latter, it is further contended, cannot properly be called an art at all, but, like the other pseudo-arts with which it is compared, rests on mere routine or crude experience, instead of scientific knowledge. The harsh injustice of this verdict astonishes us; all the more so when we consider from whom it proceeds. Apart from elocution and gesticulation, which, as Plato himself recognized, are adjuncts of secondary importance, rhetoric is in reality the art of exposition in language; and it is no exaggeration to say that one of the mightiest masters of speech has here uttered a fierce accusation against an art of which he was himself an illustrious representative. Plato was an artist in style; and if he was a philosopher first and foremost, it may equally well be said that Pericles and Themistocles—to take the examples already cited—were statesmen before everything else.

The circumstance that a production of the intellect is addressed to "assemblies" in the form of a speech, instead of seeking out individual members of such assemblies in the form of a book, cannot be regarded as a distinction of fundamental importance, nor was it so regarded by Plato in another passage (of the "Phædrus"). Nothing remains except the endeavour to exert an immediate influence on men's actions; but neither is this a feature common to all speeches (consider the genus panegyric, and display-oratory), nor is it confined to them, for, to pass over journalism, as unknown to the ancients, it is also characteristic of pamphlets

and occasional writings. In truth, Plato was unable to state any essential distinction between the oratorical exposition of thought and any other kind of exposition in language addressed to a wide public, as were, for instance, his own dialogues, and he confesses as much, indirectly, in a subsequent passage, where he classes all poetry under the head of rhetoric. That great writers, such as Plato was, do not seek only to "instruct," and that great orators, such as Demosthenes was, do not aim solely at "persuasion," it seems almost superfluous to say. And the last man to deny it ought surely to have been that author whose works contain so many richly coloured apologues, so many fervid exhortations, and among whose younger contemporaries was that orator whose effusions have been termed "reason made red-hot by passion."

On the other hand, nothing could be more just than the comparison of rhetoric to the art of the toilet. Just as a shapely figure is set off to advantage by a beautiful dress, so the garment of artistically perfect speech exhibits the full comeliness of its intellectual and emotional content. But if this art of "dressing-up," which Socrates censures, can be also used to hide physical defects and produce a false semblance of beauty, this application of it, and the reprehensible character of such application in particular cases, are, in reference to the art itself, accidental and external, as the misuse of exposition in language is in reference to rhetoric. Why, lastly, every kind of practical skill which is directed towards pleasure or enjoyment should necessarily rest on mere routine, and not on the knowledge of cause and effect, we are entirely unable to understand. Such an assertion surprises us, even when it dates, as here, from an epoch which knew nothing of the "physiology of taste," whether in the narrowest or widest sense of the word, and to which the chemistry of cookery was as foreign as the elements of æsthetics. This attitude, moreover, was not long maintained; Plato himself quashed his own verdict against rhetoric, and, in the "Phædrus," undertook to reconstruct, on a new and psychologically sounder basis, the art which, in the "Gorgias," he had condemned root and

branch. But our astonishment, for which we have so many and so excellent reasons, diminishes when we discern, in the further course of the dialogue, what Plato's real intention was—to criticize the dominant ethics and politics of his time. It is with this criticism that the heart of the dialogue is concerned ; the criticism of rhetoric as a handmaid to statecraft is merely the door by which entrance is gained to those higher regions.

The art of oratory bestows upon its adepts preponderant influence in political life : so far, Socrates and Polus are agreed. Whether such influence is a prize worth the seeking is a question on which their views are wide as the poles asunder. At first, indeed, Polus cannot believe the disagreement serious. Socrates himself, so he thinks, would not despise the possession of the most effective means of becoming powerful. Or are not the powerful to be esteemed happy ? And are not the orators in a position to carry their will and pleasure everywhere into effect ? Their pleasure, certainly, answers Socrates, but not their will ; and for this reason they cannot be termed truly powerful. The astonished Polus is instructed that means and end must always be kept strictly separate. The end of all action is happiness or well-being. That is what every one wills. But those miss their aim who seek it by the paths of injustice. Their pleasure is then to employ means which frustrate the end which they truly will. For only the just, the good man, is happy ; the unjust is miserable and unblessed. For this reason neither the popular leader nor the tyrant—the juxtaposition occurs several times in this connexion, to the surprise of ancient as well as modern readers—is truly powerful or truly happy, although they are able, as Plato continually repeats with the strongest emphasis, to kill, plunder, and banish whom they please. The ethical discussion, we observe, is thickly interspersed with outbreaks of the most passionate political antipathy. These outbreaks will occupy us later on.

Here we are concerned solely with the ethical temper which is displayed by Socrates with so much pathos, and which makes the " Gorgias " so noteworthy a contribution

to the world's literature. Socrates, or rather Plato, knows that in this temper he stands alone. But even if all the Athenians and all foreigners, if the most highly esteemed citizens, if "Pericles and his whole house," if Nicias the son of Niceratus (cf. Vol. I. p. 516), were to bear witness against him, he would still, though "standing alone," abide by his assertion that to suffer injustice is "better" than to do injustice. He will not allow himself to be thrust out "from this his possession, and from the truth," but will continue to hold that the doing of injustice is a dire calamity to the doer of it, direst of all when he remains unpunished. Rhetoric, accordingly, would then, and only then, render us the greatest service in its power, if it enabled us to accuse effectually and consign to appropriate punishment ourselves, our "parents, children, friends, or country, whenever any of them has done wrong."

If, on the other hand, it is an enemy who has done wrong, then—Plato is still far removed from the principle of love towards enemies—it would be another salutary application of rhetoric to shield him from the penalty which is his due, to make him even, if that were possible, "an immortal villain." From this conviction he is not to be moved even by the example of Archelaus, who by perjury, murder, and treachery of every kind, paved himself a way to the Macedonian throne, and who recently, after reaching the summit of power, passed out of this life, surrounded with splendour and envied by all (cf. p. 73).

Envied by all—yes, rightly, and also rightly condemned by all. Such, practically, is the rejoinder of Polus, who refuses to admit the power of wrong-doing to make men wretched, though, at the same time, he resolutely approves it to be base and blameworthy. Thus Socrates is once more confronted by that double standard of judgment, that dualistic view of life ("dividing," Plato calls it in the "Laws"), that disposition to set happiness here and virtue there, which always has found, and still finds acceptance with ordinary minds, but which drew from Socrates the most vehement contradiction. At the close of this section he gives expression to this protest in a remarkable series

of arguments by which it is sought to extract from current ideas of value themselves the conclusion that the *disgraceful* (as we shall henceforth call it) is at the same time harmful to the agent.

The reasoning here employed is closely parallel with that by which, a little earlier in the dialogue, it is proved that punishment is to the advantage of the evil-doer himself.

3. Just as Polus had been summoned into the arena by the dialectic defeat of Gorgias, so now Callicles hastens to the aid of the discomfited Polus. His mode, too, of offering assistance is the same. What had in the first instance been said of the teacher is now said of the pupil—that false shame has involved him in avoidable admissions. One such admission, Callicles contends, was that by which he conceded the doing of injustice to be more disgraceful than the suffering of it. He has, in fact, confounded two fundamentally different things, having been betrayed into so doing by Socrates, who is accustomed to turn verbal ambiguities to his own advantage in debate. *Nature is one thing, Convention another and very different thing.* The naturally disgraceful is the naturally evil, and under this head comes the suffering of injustice. It is only the slave, not the free man, whom it beseems to endure wrong, and to be unable to protect himself and those dear to him from attack. Convention, on the other hand, is the work of the many and weak, who, with an eye to their own advantage, have so framed the laws, so distributed praise and blame, that the strong are deterred from making use of their strength.

Here follows a passage with which the reader has already made acquaintance (Vol. I. pp. 405, *sqq.*). It contains a glorification of the man of force and genius, whom the multitude vainly seek to enslave and drag down to their own mean level. We are astonished at the glamour which Plato casts over the young, half-tamed lion whom he here depicts breaking his bonds and arising in the might of his inborn majesty. We admire the artistic power with which he has delineated the, to him, ethically repellent character of the "overman." Can it be that, while repelled by the misuse of genius, he still felt the attraction

of genius itself? Had he before his eyes the romantic figure of Alcibiades, whom he had seen in his impressionable youth? And did his distaste for the burdensome yoke of "collective mediocrity" help him mix his colours? Be that as it may, the example of the animal world, as well as that of international relations (the right of conquest), is pressed by Callicles into the service of his theory. But Socrates soon compels him to modify that theory in a significant manner. There is more strength in the union of many than in the strongest individual, and Callicles is fain to confess that, in comparison with the one strong man, the despised multitude is the stronger. If this is so, and might is right here as elsewhere, then convention, which has been established by the many, and which, because of this its origin, has met with such contempt, finds its justification in the doctrine of force itself. Callicles now performs a remarkable *volte-face*, and declares that it was not physical superiority, but superiority in wisdom and courage, that he has had in his mind, and which he has regarded as giving a title to rule. Hero-worship and the cult of force pass into the background, and in their stead we find a preference expressed for aristocratic institutions. Such kaleidoscopic changes of sentiment were probably frequent enough in the minds of restless politicians who were discontented with popular government, and at the same time lacked strict mental discipline. As if in scorn, Plato joins, in the person of Callicles, want of logical exactness with contempt for philosophy, which latter is said by Callicles to be a good enough occupation for the years of youth, but as unworthy of a mature man as the lisping of a child or a schoolboy's games. He who lingers over them too long loses his manhood, and is exposed defenceless to every attack—any one who likes may box his ears with impunity. Socrates proceeds with his task of cross-examination untroubled by this abusive speech. The better, by which is now meant not the stronger but the wiser, have a mission to rule and to profit by their authority. This assertion needs explanation. Ought the physician, for example, who is the wiser man in respect of foods and drinks, to consume them in

greater quantities than his less-instructed fellows? Or ought the most expert weaver to possess the largest cloak, to wear better and handsomer clothes than others? Callicles rather rudely rejects these interpretations. By "wisdom" he meant knowledge of politics, and by the "better" he meant those who possess such wisdom and are not deficient in courage. These are the men whom it befits to rule in the State, and it is just that the rulers should have many advantages over their subjects.

The aristocratic ideal of the State thus championed is now subjected to what we may call a flanking attack. Are the rulers, asks Socrates, to rule themselves as well as others? At first it seems as if a question of individual ethics had been irrelevantly introduced into a political discussion. But in reality it is not so. Plato also has an aristocratic ideal of government; he, too, believes in the rule of the "wise and brave." But it must be a just rule, and, therefore, one founded on self-mastery. It thus becomes important that he should indicate the precise point at which he and Callicles part company. In this way both the question itself may be explained, and the answer which is represented as being given to it. For Callicles gives frank expression to that which "others think, but are ashamed to say;" he preaches a gospel of pleasure and libertinage. Happiness, according to him, consists in being servant to none. He who would live rightly should allow his desires to increase as much as possible, and be in a position to satisfy them by the exercise of courage and wisdom. Having thus set up a target, Plato proceeds to batter it without mercy. But he who now speaks to us through the mouth of Socrates knows much of which the latter never dreamed. It is, to put it shortly, a pupil of the Pythagoreans that speaks to us here; and this new development, this entry on the scene of an element which never afterwards wholly disappears from Plato's thought, must now engage our attention for a moment.

4. In the dialogues which we have hitherto passed under review, we discovered no traces of mathematical training. In the "Gorgias" such traces occur not infrequently,

sometimes in close connexion with questions of ethics. Thus "geometrical equality" is mentioned as a principle "of great potency among gods and men," and is contrasted with the lust of wealth and rule, which latter is even ascribed to lack of geometrical training. We read, moreover, of "sages" who have taught these and kindred subjects; Epicharmus is quoted, as also another "Sicilian or Italian;" the Pythagorean punning comparison between the body and a grave (*σῶμα* : *σῆμα*) is employed; before long we shall meet with other Pythagorean analogies and Orphic images. No one of these indications is convincing by itself; considered in the mass, and taken together with the absence of all such features from the group of writings already treated by us, they possess considerable probative force. We may, perhaps, gather from them that the author of the "Gorgias" had already spent some time in Lower Italy, and had there been initiated into Orphic and Pythagorean modes of thought, whether it was there also that he wrote the work, or whether he waited till his return, which may well have preceded his first Sicilian journey. The nearer we approach the conclusion of the dialogue, the more numerous do the indications of such influence become.

The ideal of pleasure-seeking and personal passion set up by Callicles is combated with two kinds of weapons —arguments and analogies. The latter, which, on this occasion, possess by far the greater convincing force, are designated by Plato himself as having been borrowed from his new masters. The soul of the passionate pleasure-seeker is compared with a leaky tub, which must be continually filled afresh without rest or slackening; while the life of self-command or temperance is likened to the tranquil possession of impervious vessels brimful of precious things. Socrates seeks to prove that the good is not to be sought for the sake of pleasure, but that everything else, pleasure included, should be sought for the sake of the good. Well-being is no longer reduced, as in a passage of the "Protagoras," another of the "Republic," and, finally, in the "Laws," to pleasurable sensation, but is deprived of this content. Instead, we have formal principles, such as

were not far to seek for a student of mathematics and an ethical philosopher acquainted with the Pythagorean physics. At various critical stages in the dialogue where we expect enlightenment on the purpose of life, what we actually find is discourse, made emphatic by iteration, on regularity and order, even on harmony. The soul which participates in regularity and order is pronounced good, like a house or a utensil possessed of the same qualities; all which has not order is pronounced bad. Bodily health, too, and every other kind of physical excellence, is identified with the same principle. Functions to be performed, or services to be rendered, by the utensil, the house, the body, or the soul, are ignored altogether, or are at most declared impossible of realization apart from the above qualities. The purpose of virtue is the doing of that which is "befitting," in other words, of that which is just towards men or pious in relation to the gods. The virtuous man will seek what he ought to seek, and avoid what he ought to avoid in every department of life, pleasures and pains not excepted, and he will endure patiently when duty requires it. The word "right" is also employed as a predicate. The perfectly good man will do "well and nobly" whatever he does; and his well-doing (we have already discussed the ambiguity of the formula in the original Greek; cf. p. 70) will place well-being, or happiness, within his grasp. Lastly, we read in this connexion of "law" and that which is "legal;" but how we are to arrive at a knowledge of this law, which can hardly be identified with fluctuating positive legislation, we are left in ignorance.

5. But though the outlines of the picture may be somewhat deficient in sharpness, the colours could not be imagined stronger. There is deep, nay, stern seriousness in these pages. "The one thing needful is to live rightly; nothing less is at stake than the whole ordering of our life." Cries such as this break forth from time to time, and remind us—this is not the only instance—of the great moralist of modern Russia.

The whole of society, its leaders and representatives, are passed in review; they are weighed in the balance, and

found wanting. Socrates returns to the "arts of flattery," and this time he includes among them the music and the poetry of his age. He strips from poetry its garment of verse, and in the residue, addressed as it always is to the masses, he detects "rhetoric" pure and simple. Against musicians and poets he makes the explicit charge that they seek the pleasure, not the profit, of hearers and readers; and thus, we observe in passing, he indirectly admits what was at first denied, namely, that the means of exposition, known collectively as rhetoric, are in themselves capable of being used rightly as well as wrongly. The same admission has already been made by implication in the passage where rhetoric is said to be put to a good use when the guilty man accuses himself by its aid; and in the closing words of the dialogue the same view is affirmed with emphasis.

When the poets have been placed under the ban, the tragedians among them, and no exception made in favour of, say, Sophocles, the statesmen are added to the list. Nor does Plato now confine himself to contemporaries. "We do not know of any one who has ever shown himself a good statesman in this city," he complains; nor is Solon, the friend and kinsman of his own ancestor Dropides, exempted from the general indictment, though he is elsewhere praised as the wisest of the "seven wise men." As for the great statesmen of his own century—Cimon, Pericles, Miltiades, and Themistocles—he cites them by name, and condemns them collectively. They were no better, he declares, than herdsmen who should make the animals entrusted to their care wilder instead of tamer. In the case of the Athenians this greater wildness was shown by their behaviour towards their leading politicians. Cimon they banished temporarily (by the process known as "ostracism"); Themistocles they banished for life; Miltiades, too, was punished severely. Socrates admits, in response to the vehement protest of Callicles, that these men were able servants of the people (we should rather say, effective instruments of public opinion); that they were competent and willing to satisfy in the completest manner the desires

of the multitude. They might therefore be aptly compared to Thearion the baker, Mithæcus the cookery expert, and Sarambus the vintner, the first of whom was able to provide wonderful loaves, the second equally wonderful dishes, and the third the most delectable wines. But, as for that which is of true service to man, the statesmen knew as little of it as these three men ; such knowledge is only for the physician and the trainer in questions relating to the care of the body, and, where the soul is concerned, for those who have specially studied its needs. "You praise the men who feasted the citizens and satisfied their desires, and people say that they have made the city great, not seeing that the ulcerated and swollen condition of the State is to be attributed to these elder statesmen ; for they have filled the city full of harbours and docks, and walls and revenues and all that, and have left no room for justice and temperance." *

The statesmen disposed of, a similar but somewhat more mildly conceived verdict is passed upon the sophists. The reasons are the same in both cases. "No statesman," Socrates tells us, "can ever suffer evil unjustly at the hands of the State which he has governed ;" if the people rise up against him, that proves he has insufficiently performed his task of educating them. The case is similar with those sophists or teachers of virtue who complain of unjust treatment by their pupils, in such matters as the payment of fees. Callicles, who reveals himself as a despiser of the "good for nothing" sophists, and objects to their being placed on a level with statesmen, is met with the reply that the sophist and the rhetorician (the term is here synonymous with "popular leader" or "statesman") are the same, or very nearly the same thing. The only difference is that sophistic ranks just as much above rhetoric (in the hierarchy of the pseudo-arts) as legislation and gymnastics rank above legal administration and medicine (in the hierarchy of the true arts—the arts designated as higher are those which aim at the production, or the apparent production, of permanent conditions ; the lower, at the

* 518 E, trans. Jowett.

removal, real or apparent, of temporary derangements). The sophists are evidently in good company for once, that of the great statesmen and still greater poets.

The yawning chasm which divides Socrates from contemporary society and its canons of judgment portends for him—as he is well aware, even without the warning given him by Callicles—a danger of no small magnitude. Let him cherish, if he will, his conviction that he "alone, or in company with but very few, pursues the right method in politics"—his faith will not save him from persecution. He will be summoned before the judges, and he will fare there much as would a physician who should be accused by a confectioner before a jury of children. What defence could the poor man raise against the charge of making the children's lives a burden to them by bitter medicines, by hunger and thirst, even by burning and cutting, while the accuser has dispensed to them nothing but sweetmeats? Socrates, therefore, being ignorant of the arts of flattery, quite expects to be condemned to death; this, however, is not so much to be dreaded as that he should descend into the lower world with a load of injustice burdening his soul.

6. The working out of this last thought occupies the closing portion of the dialogue. It begins with an account of how the dead are judged. In this description, which is full of striking allusions to Orphic doctrines, Socrates himself professes to see, not a mere tale, but a statement of the truth. It had been a primordial enactment of the gods that the souls of the pious and just should go to the Islands of the Blessed, while those of the godless and the unjust should be exiled to the house of punishment called Tartarus. But the manner of executing the judgment underwent a far-reaching change, soon after Zeus obtained the sovereignty. Before that time, living judges had judged men about to die, but still living, like themselves; and much injustice had been the consequence. For the living defendants had veiled their corrupted souls with the covering of bodily beauty, or the splendour of wealth and noble birth, by which means they had

procured much false testimony in their own favour. The judges, too, had been subject to error, for their souls were also behind veils of ears and eyes and other bodily organs. Now, however, the dead are judged by the dead, naked souls by naked souls; Minos, Æacus, and Rhadamanthus, three sons of Zeus, have that office. The stripped soul now shows its quality and the manner of its earthly pilgrimage. All its misdeeds have left their mark upon it: lying and deceit have made it crooked; perjury and injustice have branded it with scars and wales as though it had been scourged; pride and dissolute living have destroyed all its symmetry and beauty. The judges, therefore, discern without fail the character of the souls before them, and send them to the appointed place of punishment, where those which are still curable are cleansed by discipline, and the incurable help to reform others who see them suffer. Among the worst souls are to be found those of powerful princes and tyrants; nor will the soul of the much-envied Archelaus be elsewhere than in the midst of them. For it is but rarely that he to whose lot fulness of power has fallen can preserve himself pure. Only a few have done so, among whom must be reckoned the just Aristides, the son of Lysimachus. He, however, who has the best right to await the future with confidence is the philosopher who has kept himself clear from the reproach of doing "many men's business." Thus Socrates for his part hopes that when he presents his soul to the judges in the underworld, it will be among those which are least corrupted; and, in conclusion, he calls upon Callicles and all others to follow his example. In all that discussion in which they have just been engaged, one thesis alone remained firm and unshaken, namely, that men should be more on their guard against the doing than the suffering of wrong, and that neither for individual nor for community is there any end so worthy to be pursued with zeal and earnestness, as the being, rather than the seeming to be, good. Towards this end may rhetoric, like everything else, render its due share of service!

7. With these full chords closes that psalm of justice,

as we may be permitted to term the "Gorgias." The work charms the soul of every reader by its content still more than by the greatness of its plan and its perfect execution. It produced, moreover, a powerful immediate effect. A Corinthian farmer, according to a statement in a lost dialogue of Aristotle, read the book, and without delay left his fields and vineyard in order to become a pupil of Plato. The aged Gorgias himself, whose name the dialogue bears, lived to see it published, and is reported to have exclaimed, in pained admiration of what could not but appear to him a violent caricature of his art, "Athens has produced a new Archilochus!" The debate on the value of rhetoric, nay, on its very right to exist, was continued for centuries, with an ever-repeated reference to the Platonic dialogue. Thus the rhetorician Aristides, as late as the middle of the second century A.D., composed two orations in defence of his art, and devoted a third to the justification of the "four statesmen" whom Plato assailed. And the Neo-Platonist Porphyrius answered him in a work of seven books.

Here we pause for a few reflexions on the subject of historical appreciations. That Plato's condemnation of *all* Athenian statesmen, and of the four in particular, far overshoots the mark, it is quite superfluous to say. To this we have a witness whom none can reject—Plato himself. Hard upon the end of the dialogue, we find him hastening to eulogize a particular Athenian statesman, Aristides—a piece of self-correction that it warms the heart to see. In the "Phædrus" he speaks of Pericles in another and more respectful tone; and, in the "Meno," the statesmen, while placed below the philosophers, are still to a considerable degree rehabilitated. For the rest, the injustice of that unfavourable verdict is palpable. The comparison of statesmen with shepherds presupposes their possession of a power which few politicians have ever attained in constitutionally governed states. Again, the fact of their being punished by the people is represented as a proof of their pernicious influence, without any regard to the question whether such punishment is undeserved or richly deserved, as in the case

of Miltiades. And their use of the unlimited power attributed to them is painted in the darkest colours; by a "union of the most diametrically opposed," as the rhetorician Aristides calls it, their rule is assimilated to that of tyrants; the popular leaders are spoken of as despots who are able to rob, murder, and banish whom they choose.

Whence, we naturally ask ourselves, comes this bitterness on Plato's part so far in excess of all reasonable limits? Is it to be attributed, as we may at first be inclined to suppose, to the execution of his master? Without doubt that deed of horror had deeply wounded his soul. But since that time an interval of at least several years, for in it falls his Italian sojourn, had elapsed; and these were the years during which those dialogues were almost certainly composed which centre in the "Protagoras," and which breathe throughout a spirit of lighthearted cheerfulness. The flame of wrath must in the mean time have been fed with fresh fuel. We now call to mind the political situation which had been created by the naval victory of Cnidus (Midsummer, 394). The very party which counted Anytus among its leaders was then triumphant. The Laconizers, among whom were Plato's friends and kinsmen, were the vanquished side, and had doubtless been subjected to much harsh and unjust treatment. The hero of the hour, the man who was being acclaimed as the restorer of the State and the democracy, was Conon, who had defeated Sparta, and who, by rebuilding the long walls, had resumed and crowned the work of Themistocles, Cimon, and Pericles.

These same topics had also been treated of by Polycrates, in his lampoon on the memory of Socrates (cf. p. 114). This work, probably a poor performance in itself, was brought into undeserved prominence by the political situation, and for that reason called forth a counterblast in the "Gorgias." As Polycrates had singled out the martyred philosopher's anti-constitutional sentiments for special attack, it was natural that the reply should in like manner, be political in tone, and that it should take vengeance upon those statesmen (and their predecessors)

whom the pamphleteer had glorified. Polycrates, as we may confidently infer from the "Apology" of Libanius (cf. p. 118), had charged Socrates with making the Athenians "lazy," and, no doubt, fond of talk too—a cognate fault which the "beggarly prater" was sure to encourage. Plato answers by retorting the charge. Not Socrates, but "Pericles made the Athenians lazy and fond of talk, and not only that, but cowardly and avaricious as well." It is Pericles whom he names, but he cannot have had this statesman alone, or even principally, in view. For he specifies "payment of the people" as the instrument of corruption. But what Pericles contributed to this practice was, as we have recently learnt, merely a modest beginning; he introduced, that is to say, the payment of the dicasts, or jurors. The more important payment of the ecclesiasts, or men who attended the assembly of the people, did not begin until the nineties, soon after which beginning it was considerably increased. In both these later developments the responsibility lay with Agyrrhius, a powerful and popular politician of the day; and it is against this man, in all probability, that Plato's outburst is mainly directed.

But if Plato went further, and condemned the statesmen of Athens in the lump, without sparing even the most ancient and most honoured names, this too was in response to the challenge of Polycrates. The latter had entered into comparisons. With those who found much to censure in the Athenian democracy, as Socrates and his friends did, he contrasted the great men who were reverenced as the founders of the State, Solon among them, and even the mythical Theseus. These heroes, as being men of action, not wordy pedants and quibblers, were held up by him as the most fitting objects of popular admiration; just as, in modern Germany, the followers of a revolutionary theorist might be referred back to "Bismarck and Old Fritz." The extravagance of the onslaught was met by equal extravagance in the rejoinder, which admitted no redeeming quality in any statesman who had ever engaged in Athenian politics.

8. Where the waves of passion run so high, the helm of

logic generally refuses its office. And in truth the "Gorgias" must be reckoned, from the argumentative point of view, among the weakest products of Plato's pen. A rapid review of the chief fallacies contained in it may perhaps afford us a useful glimpse into the less admirable side of the Platonic and Socratic conceptual philosophy.

Polus, as we remember, was thrown into confusion as a result of his admission that the doing of injustice is more disgraceful and more ignoble than the suffering of it. The argument has the following form: That alone is disgraceful which causes either momentary pain or lasting injury. Now, the doing of injustice is not the more painful; it must therefore be the more harmful. From this the inference was drawn that the doing of injustice is more harmful to the doer himself than is the suffering of it to the sufferer. Every one must see that the judgment, "This or that mode of action is disgraceful," does no more than express the *displeasure* of the person or persons by whom it is affirmed, and gives no information whatever on the grounds of that displeasure. At the very most it implies that some such grounds do really exist. It is not even safe to go a step further, and assert that the action in question cannot with justice be pronounced displeasing unless it is in some way detrimental to the welfare of some sentient being. (For this would be to exclude the predicate "disgraceful" from the sphere of æsthetics, and limit it to that of ethics, or rather that part of ethics which is concerned with utility.) But, conceding this point, there is no process of dialectical magic which can conjure out of the above proposition any means of deciding who the beings are whom an act of wrong-doing injures, or any proof that the doers, rather than the sufferers, of injustice are in the worse case. Plato claims to discover the Socratic faith in the power of injustice to destroy happiness already contained in current opinion, but he only does so by first importing it there himself. Immediately afterwards we find the same method pressed into the service of a kindred thesis.

The proposition to be established is that punishment,

when rightly inflicted, is always and everywhere salutary, or useful, to the person punished. The mode of proof is as follows: Whenever anything acts upon anything else, the passive side of the process is similar in quality to the active. Thus, if A strikes B quickly or violently, B experiences a rapid succession of blows, or violent blows, that is, such as cause him violent pain. "As is the action of the agent, so is the suffering of the patient." Now, he who punishes rightly, punishes justly. When justice is done, justice is also suffered. The just is noble; the noble is good, and therefore also either pleasurable or useful. Since, then, punishment does not give pleasure, it must perforce be useful.

The very starting-point of this demonstration is no more than a half-truth. In a causal process there are some qualities which are repeated in the effect, and others which are not. If A strikes quickly, B is struck quickly. But that to the violence of the blow must correspond the intensity of the pain, is not by any means clear. It is not merely that the blow may fall on a part of the body affected by permanent or temporary, total or partial anæsthesia; such possibilities may be reckoned under the head of abnormalities, or rare and negligible exceptions. But the fact that sensitiveness is modified by individual and racial endowment, by the novelty or strangeness of the impression, by hardening or the reverse; that the Redskin, with nerves of steel, will feel a blow differently from the more tender-fibred European; that one accustomed to the lash is not affected by it in the same way as he who has hitherto been exempt from it; that the same blow is less felt after heavier than after lighter strokes;—these and similar facts deserve serious consideration, because they throw a strong light on the importance of the subjective factor in sensation. It would be easy to quote far more complicated cases, and to prove from them that the relation between the external agent or stimulus and the sensation thereby produced is far removed from the simplicity which Plato here attributes to it.

But we are very willing to leave on one side all the

psychological and psychophysical questions which arise in this connexion. For suppose the first step in the proof to be as unassailable as it is the opposite, the argument which follows will still be open to the strongest objection. The same criticism is applicable to it which we were obliged to pass on the reasoning by which it is preceded. Admitted that the just is noble, the noble good, the good, when not pleasurable, useful,—the question still remains open: useful *to whom?* Why precisely to the person punished, and not rather to society, the protection of which, after all, is one of the uncontested ends of punishment?

To pass from the form of proof to the result obtained, how widely have opinions differed, and still differ, on the end of punishment! We see some penalties imposed with a view to religious expiation, others intended to deter, or to make offenders harmless; and all of them adapted to their several purposes. How can it be maintained that all alike are fitted to exert a cleansing or reforming influence on the souls of those on whom they fall? We call to mind, lastly, that there is a psychological counterpart to the tanned hide of the much-flogged rogue. We remember the blunted conscience of the inveterate villain, the incorrigible, the "incurable" in general. Of such Plato treats in his "judgment of the dead," and to the punishing of them he assigns no other end than the deterring of others. But in this he contradicts the thesis laid down in the passage we are considering. To the hardened criminal there comes through punishment at least as much "justice" as to the novice in crime; and yet "justice" is here represented as something in its own nature salutary and useful to the person punished, no matter what his character may be. That which is most noteworthy in this, as in the preceding, argument, is the state of mind out of which it arises—the tendency to interrogate current judgments and notions in the hope of gaining from them that illumination which nothing but the direct investigation of facts can supply. To this point it is perhaps worth while to devote a moment's consideration.

When Socrates first cast an inquirer's eye over the

world of concepts, there awaited him not a few surprises, and those of no mean magnitude. This hitherto unexplored world could not but produce, in almost as great degree as the material universe, the impression of an organized whole. The well-ordered fabric of superior and subordinate concepts, broadening downwards in the direction of concrete reality, and tapering upwards towards the most comprehensive abstractions, was bound to fascinate and charm the mind of the beholder as much by its magnificence as by the mystery of its origin. The acquisitions which in the course of centuries, nay, millenniums, had been gained by the obscure labour of analyzing and combining thought upon the material of sensation, and preserved in the storehouse of language, were sure to produce an impression all the more imposing because at that time the disadvantageous side of the processes concerned had hitherto passed all but unnoticed. Words are the helpful servants of thought; but, useful as they are, they diligently foster and faithfully cherish their master's errors. The Greek knew but one tongue, his own, and that only in a late literary phase; he was, therefore, without any means of shaking off the heavy yoke of language. Nothing was known of what we call the "life of words," of the caprices of linguistic usage, which, advancing upon the stepping-stones of analogy, now generalizes the meaning of a word beyond all admissible bounds, and again, with equal arbitrariness, performs the reverse process of restrictive specialization. In short, the natural history, as well of speech as of thought, was entirely unknown, and, in the absence of any corrective, the cult of concepts was soon carried to the length of superstition.

It frequently happened, in the course of these first essays in the study of notions, that commuity of meaning was looked for, where all that really existed was a community of name, brought about by a long series of imperceptible transitions. Such, for example, was the case with the attempts to define the good and the beautiful. On the other hand, where language had erected a boundary-post, there, it was assumed, some difference

must exist, deeply rooted in the inmost essence of things. This mode of treatment was soon extended from single concepts to combinations of them, that is, to judgments. Widely diffused beliefs, particularly those relating to values, were credited with little less than infallibility. Where assent could not be yielded to them, tireless energy was expended in interpretation, until traditional judgments had been explained into an entirely artificial agreement with private conviction. Thus it came about that, as with Plato in the present case and elsewhere, traditional judgments were looked upon as a kind of mine, in which one might go burrowing after truths, which by no possibility could be found there. This disposition to delight in ideas and fight shy of facts may be illustrated—to avoid disputed questions of philosophic method—by that "law of nature" which did not become obsolete till the nineteenth century, or by the mental attitude of those many jurists who, to use a humorous expression of Rudolf von Jhering, keep their telescope pointed to the "heaven of ideas," and there cast about for discoveries which only the solid ground of human needs and relationships could have in store for them.

Two more fallacies lie ensconced in that part of the dialogue which may be shortly described as a refutation of Hedonism. It is proposed to prove the thesis that pleasure is not among the number of goods or "good" things. If it were so, then, it is contended, "good" men would have the greatest share of it, since they are "good" in no other way than by participation in "the good." In reality, however, they have no such preponderating share. Cases are cited in which not the good man, but his opposite, not the brave man, but the coward, enjoy the greater pleasure. It is true they also suffer more pain, but this point, though it finds mention, is not pursued further. The instance adduced is that of war: when the enemy withdraws from the land, the coward rejoices with a greater joy than the brave man; and similarly he is more distressed when his country is invaded. Here, as we may remark by the way, the Plato of the earlier "Protagoras" or the later

"Laws" might have had recourse to his moral arithmetic or mensuration. He might have weighed the pleasures and pains characteristic of the coward and the brave man respectively against each other, the result of which process, we may be sure, would not have been to show a balance in favour of the first-named; and he might have pointed out, in addition, that the pleasures of the brave man exceed those of the coward by at least that overplus which is the result of his equanimity and tranquil stability of character. But Plato has here confined his attention to what may be called momentary or acute pleasures, as distinguished from permanent or chronic states; and indeed the general distinction between the temporary and the fleeting was so deeply impressed upon the mind of the author of the "Gorgias," that, in comparison with it, even the difference between pleasure and pain recedes into the background. The repugnance which he now manifests for pleasurable sensations of a violent or passionate character causes him to attach to the word "pleasure" a narrower meaning than that which it has formerly borne, and will again bear, for him: it has ceased to be, and has not yet become again, the raw material of happiness. Otherwise he would most probably have found, precisely as in the "Laws," that the "life of courage" does indeed contain "a smaller number and a less intense degree of pleasures and pains," but yet exhibits, on the whole, "a greater balance of pleasure than the life of cowardice."

Here, however, we are concerned only with the logical form of the proof. And in this connexion we may well be astonished by the iridescent ambiguity of the word "good." Pleasure is represented as not being a good, or good thing, on the ground that good men obtain less of it than bad men. Now, the men whom we call good are those whose disposition of will appears to us worthy of praise, in forming which estimate the Socratics laid the chief stress on the knowledge or wisdom by which the will is determined. On the other hand, by a good or good thing we understand a valuable possession, whether it be an object of the external world or an element of the inner

life. Need we quote an example to show how little the one has to do with the other? For Plato, as for others, bodily health and strength are among the number of goods. But what full vials of scorn would he have poured out over the contention that those less richly endowed with these good things, the physically feeble and the ailing, ought therefore not to be called "good" in the ethical sense! In order to understand this fallacy, we must bear in mind that while Plato, as we have just observed, sometimes recognizes a variety of goods, of which wisdom is the highest, he also, on occasion, designates this quality as not merely the highest, but the only good. Such, in all probability, was his thought in writing the present passage. His reasoning remains faulty all the same, but his negative conclusion becomes comprehensible as the converse of an intelligible positive proposition. In wisdom, knowledge, or virtue, he sees at once the quality which makes men good, and the only good thing, that is, the one legitimate object of human strivings.

The second paralogism which we encounter here may be rapidly disposed of. Plato had first of all illustrated the inferiority of the life of pleasure and desire by such analogies as that of the leaky tub—comparisons to which, as approximately faithful images of actual facts, considerable probative force must be allowed. But this is not enough for the author of the "Gorgias." He is striving after that formal rigour of proof with which his mathematical studies have made him familiar. He wishes to prove that the proposition, "Pleasure is a good," contains a contradiction in itself. By "pleasure" he again means only that species of it which is bound up with the satisfaction of desire. There is, no doubt, considerable point in the appeal, which he now makes explicitly, having already suggested it by a figure, to the fact that every satisfaction of a desire or need implies a previous want, that is, a feeling in some degree painful. But we can see no merit whatever in the argument which follows, and which is put forward as if it were conclusive, to the effect that because every pleasure (of the kind considered) includes a pain in itself,

it is therefore not a good, since good cannot contain evil. To which it may be answered that the one thing is just as possible and just as impossible as the other; the principle of contradiction is, if applicable at all to either case, equally so to both. The truth is, of course, that it is applicable to neither. For the psychical process connected with the appeasement of a desire, say, with the slaking of thirst, does not involve the coexistence of mutually exclusive contradictories, such as are pleasure and pain, but only a rapid succession of the two states.

9. This fallacy seems to us to be of less importance than its root in Plato's mind. For, this time it is neither insufficient logical training nor incomplete emancipation from the bonds of language that has caused his error. The same inner contradiction appears to him admissible in one region of thought which is regarded as the lower, and inadmissible in another, higher, region. We have here touched on a point of no mean importance for the understanding of the whole dialogue.

Clear and certain traces of the doctrine of ideas will be vainly sought for in the pages of the "Gorgias." But it may be maintained with confidence that the spirit of the new teaching already overshadows this work. It betrays its presence by that distinction between the two spheres, conceived as separated by a wide chasm, which we shall soon find designated respectively as the world of true being and the world of mere semblance. It betrays itself most of all by a sentence thrown out casually in the "judgment of the dead"—a sentence from which our present interpretation derives no little support—to the effect that corporeality is an impediment to pure knowledge. Similarly, we shall find the other Orphic and Pythagorean elements which emerge in this dialogue employed in the construction and the articulation of the doctrine of ideas.

The dialogue contains sundry other indications which mark it as belonging to a transition period; and is not free from the contradictions characteristic of such works. In a passage near the beginning of it, the Socratic doctrine, "He who knows the good does it," is used as a weapon

against Gorgias. It is urged that if the teacher of rhetoric has imparted to his pupil the true knowledge of justice and injustice, all misuse of rhetoric for unjust purposes becomes impossible. But this accords ill with what we read further on: "It is impossible to be freed from injustice in any other way" (than by punishment). What then, we ask, if the pupil was already affected with injustice? How can bare instruction remove the injustice from his soul? Nor do the words last quoted stand alone. Discipline and punishment are referred to repeatedly, and with the greatest emphasis, as the principal reforming and educating agents. There is, further, more than one allusion to deeply corrupted, and even incurably depraved souls, and this although Socratism knows no source of evil but error, and no remedy save instruction and enlightenment—a theory with which the practice of the Cynics and the Cyrenaics, as far as we are acquainted with it, was in complete agreement. In the "Gorgias," on the other hand, as well as in later works, Plato admits, both indirectly and explicitly, that other impulses assist in the determination of the will besides those that spring from (perfect or imperfect) knowledge. The evil will appears as an entirely independent factor, like a disease which needs a cure, or an ulcer which calls for excision. The Socratic intellectualism begins to lose ground in favour of a less one-sided view of human nature, which is destined, finally, to issue in the doctrine of the three parts of the soul. It is true that at the same time Plato holds firmly to such propositions as, "No one errs of his own free will;" but they gradually acquire the significance of what our historians of civilization call "survivals." Plato allows them to stand unimpeached, but unceasingly digs away their foundations from beneath them.

As we have already hinted, it is Plato's ethics, and not merely its psychological basis, that undergoes transformation. The change appears most unmistakably in that passage of the "judgment of the dead" where souls are spoken of as deformed by sin, and where "symmetry and beauty" are treated as marks of moral goodness. A foreign

and dangerous substance, one might almost say an explosive, is here introduced into the fabric of the Socratic ethics. For who will vouch that the new canon of beauty will always yield the same results as the old canon of utility? Here again, as we may remark by the way, Plato adds to his intellectual property a new and valuable element, which, though certainly not the whole of ethics, constitutes a by no means despicable part of it. Fulness and consistency never advance, *pari passu*, in the beginnings of a system of thought or belief; sometimes in no part of its history. The additions which are inevitable when account is taken of previously neglected elements always occasion, in the first instance, a loss of logical unity, until at last an effort, sometimes a successful effort, is made towards reconciliation.

Nor were such efforts wanting in the case of Plato. In his last work, his philosophic testament, as it may be called, he explicitly compares the several ethical standards—"beauty and truth," "virtue and honour"—which, in the "Gorgias," had appeared in merely casual juxtaposition; and he now asserts their entire compatibility, not only with each other, but with that well-being which, almost on the same page of the earlier work, was designated as the end of life, and which is now once more analyzed into pleasurable sensations. But the strength of his faith is no longer what it was. In the "Gorgias" Plato proclaims the coincidence of virtue and happiness as an axiomatic verity; he knows a thousand tongues will contradict him, yet he thunders his message, with triumphant assurance, into the ears of the world. It is not a little surprising, after this, to find that, when he reaffirms the same thesis in the "Republic," he is at pains to support it by a long-drawn-out series of arguments, rising by a tortuous course from the individual to society. Lastly, in the "Laws," when his race is run, the aged thinker holds, indeed, without wavering, to the faith of his youth; but it is rather because he is inwardly penetrated by a sense of its salutary influence than because he is convinced of its demonstrable truth. He even lets slip the observation that, supposing the

whole arsenal of arguments should be found insufficient, it would still be incumbent on every not wholly incompetent legislator to come to the rescue, and, by means of a "lie with a purpose"—the most useful of its kind—to make provision for the education of mankind.

But for us, who are still at the "Gorgias," this is a long way to look ahead. The old Socratic doctrine, "Moral goodness and happiness are inseparably united," dominates the dialogue. It has drawn new and strengthening nourishment from the Orphic representation of wrong-doing as something that invariably stains and burdens the soul. It is further reinforced by the hopes of a hereafter and the terrors of a world below which it derives from the same source. Here, in brief, we have the inmost kernel of the dialogue, on the origin and plan of which we desire to cast one farewell glance before we pass on.

The deep resentment which had been aroused in Plato's breast by the fate of his beloved master was kindled afresh and fanned into fiercer flame by the condition of the State, by the triumph of the party from whose midst had come the author of that unhappy deed, and by the venomous pamphlet of Polycrates, in which the master's memory was blackened, and the disciples covered with obloquy. He sought relief in an outburst of violent indignation, which was directed, in the first place, against the statesmen of Athens, and, in the second, against the art—rhetoric—which was the instrument at once of their education and of their power. This conflict issues, finally, in a duel, in which Plato, single-handed, and speaking through the mouth of Socrates, combats the whole of society, together with all the makers and all the spokesmen of public opinion—poets, musicians, teachers of youth. Even the most revered elements are not spared. It is not without a purpose that Plato names, among those with whom Socrates places himself in antagonism, the personally most blameless of contemporary statesmen, Nicias the son of Niceratus. All the members of Athenian society, even those of them who stand on the highest moral level, labour, so he would suggest, under one great and decisive

defect. They lack the Socratic faith in the indissoluble oneness of justice and happiness; and with this they also lack that absolute and impregnable fixity of the good will which excludes all possibility of lukewarmness or vacillation.

Plato proceeds to develop his ideal, and presently holds out what for him is the most important element in it as the only fit object of study and pursuit. He begins by rejecting all popular ideals, those professed openly as well as those cherished in secret: hero-worship, the not wholly unselfish rule of the most capable, the life of unbridled pleasure-seeking. Having eliminated these, he proceeds, with increasing earnestness, to explain the one thing needful, and sketches a pattern in which the features of strict Socratism are blended with those of the Orphic and Pythagorean faith. To the former category belong the indifference to all externals which is here carried, to speak with Callicles, to the length of "turning the whole of life inside out." Nowhere else does Plato stand so near his fellow-pupil Antisthenes as in the "Gorgias." It is not only that they entirely agree in their condemnation of the statesmen (cf. p. 154), nor that they display a common contempt for all the ordinary goals of human action, without excepting the labours of those who work for the safety of the State. They are also at one in their depreciation of "pleasure," which elsewhere in Plato appears as an element of happiness, and is here regarded almost exclusively from the standpoint of the appeasement of desire. The most powerful are, in general, also the worst of men—such is the import of a passage in the "judgment of the dead" which is entirely Cynic in colouring (cf. p. 159). In the same passage we are told that the wise are those who may hope most confidently for blessedness hereafter—a pronouncement in harmony with the Orphic teachings handed down to us by Pindar and Empedocles. Thus, in the midst of that majestic *finale*, Socratism and Orphic Pythagoreanism, Plato's two guides for the remainder of his life, join hands together.

Out of the fusion of these elements will grow the

system of thought which occupies the central and principal phase in our philosopher's development.

To expound this doctrine of the soul and of ideas will shortly be our task. But before we approach it, we must first spend some little time by the way.

CHAPTER VI.

PLATO'S "EUTHYPHRO" AND "MENO."

1. FAR be from us the presumption of assigning to every dialogue of Plato its exact position in the series of his works. Still, there are among these writings some which, apart from their inclusion in a definite group, may with certainty be pronounced anterior to some dialogues and posterior to others. Such a dialogue is the "Euthyphro." We have good grounds for the view that it followed the "Protagoras" and the "Gorgias" and preceded the "Republic." What these grounds are will appear in our analysis of this little work, the general plan of which is as follows :—

Socrates and Euthyphro meet hard by the office of the magistrate known as the "King Archon." They ask each other what occasion has brought them together there. Socrates has been summoned to appear before the court. The accusation proceeds from a young and little-known man. "Meletus, I think, is his name. Do you know him? Perhaps you remember his lank hair, his scrubby beard, and his hawk nose?" Not even so much as this is known by Euthyphro of the man who has dared to bring an accusation against Socrates on a capital charge. Yet Meletus — so Socrates himself remarks with scathing sarcasm—is taking hold of politics by the right end; he begins by protecting the youth against their corrupters, just as a careful gardener sees first of all to the welfare of the still tender shoots. Euthyphro, on the other hand, is not a defendant, but an accuser; moreover, it is his own

father whom he wishes to prosecute. The facts of the case are as follows: His father possesses an estate in the island of Naxos. A day-labourer employed by him killed one of his slaves in a drunken brawl. This labourer was thereupon bound hand and foot and thrown into a ditch, and a messenger sent to Athens to bring back instructions on the procedure to be adopted against the murderer. But before the messenger returned, hunger and cold had made an end of the life which had been treated with such scant respect. The son now considers himself under an obligation to bring the case before a court of justice, lest the blood-guiltiness of his father, which has aroused the displeasure of the gods, should go unpunished. Socrates disapproves of an action so contrary to natural duty. But Euthyphro, who is a soothsayer by profession, vaunts his accurate acquaintance with divine law. Socrates welcomes the opportunity of deepening his knowledge of such matters; it will, as he hopes, turn to his advantage in his coming trial. Thus the ground is prepared for a thorough-going discussion of the essence of piety.

In reply to the question—What is pious, and what impious? Euthyphro at first merely refers to the class of instances to which his own action belongs. It is pious, he says, to accuse evil-doers, and, in so doing, to spare neither father nor mother nor any one else. He finds "strong confirmation" of this maxim in the examples set by the gods. Did not Zeus dethrone Cronos because he devoured his own children? and did not Cronos himself, for a similar cause, mutilate his father Uranus? Socrates raises difficulties. War, strife, and hatred among the gods have always seemed to him incredible things. It is possible that precisely this negative attitude of his towards those old tales may have something to do with the indictment of Meletus. Still, he would gladly take this opportunity of being taught better by an expert. But, first of all, he would like a plain answer to his question. For Euthyphro has not as yet delivered his opinion on the essence of piety, but only mentioned particular cases of it.

Euthyphro accedes to this request, and informs Socrates

that "pious" means pleasing to the gods, "impious" displeasing to them. Delighted as he is with the manner of this answer, Socrates is not entirely satisfied with its substance. Moreover, the objection which rises to his lips is one which Euthyphro has himself suggested, by his talk of the conflicts and enmities of the gods. What is pleasing to one god may very well be displeasing to another; one and the same thing may, for aught we know, be hated by Cronos and loved by Zeus, be acceptable to Hephæstus and an abomination to Hera. This uncertainty, too, would affect questions of good and evil, of fair and foul, of just and unjust; not such matters as admit of exact determination by weight, measure, and number. This objection is surmounted by a restrictive addition: that is pious which is pleasing to *all* the gods. But a new question at once presents itself—*Is that which is pious pious because it pleases the gods? or are the gods pleased with it because it is pious?*

Of these alternatives the second is preferred, on grounds to which we shall return later on. But, on this view, the preceding discussion has failed of its end; it has not brought to light the essence of piety, but only an accidental attribute of it, the fact, namely, that it is pleasing to the gods. Here ends the first, negative, portion of the dialogue, the barrenness of which becomes a subject of jesting to both interlocutors. Socrates himself alludes to his profession of statuary, and to the ancestor of his guild, Dædalus, who was reported to have made statues which moved; even so, none of their conclusions will consent to stand firm. But this gibe, he goes on to say, is not quite in place; for it was Euthyphro who was responsible for those conclusions. To which Euthyphro replies, "As far as I am concerned, they would never budge an inch; you are the Dædalus that has breathed into them a spirit of unrest."

The discussion is beginning to flag, when Socrates gives it a new and powerful impulse. On his initiative, the concept of "piety" is subsumed under that of "justice." The latter is expressly designated as the "more extensive,

for the pious is a part of the just." It becomes of importance to distinguish that part of justice which relates to the gods and the "service of the gods" from the part which relates to men. The word we have translated "service" may also be rendered "tendance," and is used as well of the care bestowed on domestic animals as of the worship paid to the gods. In regard to the former of these two uses, it appears, on closer examination, that such care or "tendance" is directed towards the welfare of the object tended. The question is accordingly asked—How does this tendance profit the gods? Are we to suppose that by our pious actions we make the gods better than they were? The tendance due to the gods must rather be interpreted as "service" in the narrower sense, as analogous to that which is rendered by servants to their master. This species of service is now examined more closely.

He who serves a physician, a shipbuilder, an architect, assists towards the attainment of an end—the restoration of health, the construction of a ship or a house. What then—thus Socrates questions Euthyphro, who is "so well informed on things divine"—what is that "marvellous work, in the doing of which the gods use us as their servants"? As no satisfactory answer is forthcoming, Socrates lends a helping hand. He points out that "victory in war" is the "chief part" of a general's work, that "the obtaining of food from the earth" is the principal achievement of the farmer, and he desires to be told, with equal definiteness, what is the most important part of the work of the gods. Euthyphro, however, is unable to satisfy him, and Socrates expresses his disappointment in words which point the way towards the understanding of the dialogue: "You might have told me in a few words, if you had liked, what that chief part is; but you were unwilling to instruct me. Otherwise you would not have turned away again when you were so near the goal." It has long been recognized that in this passage Plato desires to suggest the solution of the riddle, and that this solution, as is gathered more particularly from the "Republic," would run somewhat as follows: "The work of the gods is the

good, and to be pious is to be the organ of their will, as thus directed."

But, to go back a little, Euthyphro, an orthodox adherent of the popular religion and a believer in holiness by works, explains piety as consisting in sacrifice and prayer. Socrates has little difficulty in bringing these two actions under the more general heads of giving and asking. He proceeds to elicit the admission that men cannot give to the gods anything which is of any use to the latter; and that piety, on this view of its nature, is reduced to a kind of "trading," in which the gods, who give us every good gift and get nothing of value in return, have very much the worst of the bargain. Euthyphro, who has followed this argument with growing uneasiness, withdraws to a position of greater safety by insisting that offerings brought to the gods are to be regarded as gifts of honour, as tokens of reverence which win their good will. Socrates draws his attention to the fact that the pious has once more been resolved into that which pleases the gods. Thus the investigation has ended exactly where it began. "My art," says Socrates, jestingly, "is even superior to that of my ancestor, Dædalus, for I not only make my figures —the arguments—move, as you say I do, but I cause them to revolve in a circle, which brings them back to their starting-point." He goes on to say that he is greatly disappointed, and complains bitterly that the knowledge which might be of the highest value to him in his defence against Meletus, is being withheld from him by the selfish obstinacy of Euthyphro. For no one can possibly imagine that a son could bring himself to act in such a manner towards his aged father unless he were possessed of the most exact information on the nature of piety and impiety.

2. The purpose of the dialogue is no doubt in part apologetic. It cannot be for no cause that the figure of Meletus appears behind that of Euthyphro. The one is the counterpart of the other. Both of them take their stand on those traditional opinions on things divine which the Socratic cross-examination shows to be confused and

self-contradictory. Chastisement is meted out to the criminal levity which, on the strength of such chaotic views, presumes to threaten the life, in the one case of a father, in the other of a national benefactor. But the aim of the dialogue goes considerably further than this. Not only does the criticism of prevalent religious teaching possess an independent value of its own ; it is a mistake to ascribe to the dialogue, as was formerly customary, a purely sceptical or negative tendency. Against such a view is to be set the manner in which Socrates himself, that is to say Plato, comes forward, at the critical stage of the discussion, with a suggestion that raises it above the level of mere criticism —we refer to his attempt to subsume piety under the concept of justice. There is also that near approach to a positive result which is indicated to us by the significant hint already mentioned (". . . when you were so near the goal"). The possibility of recognizing these facts is due to a comparison with the "Republic;" and the same parallel affords us a deeper insight into the motives which guided Plato in the composition of the "Euthyphro," besides assisting towards a determination of its chronological position.

In the "Gorgias," no less than in the "Protagoras," piety is reckoned among the chief virtues. It is placed by the side of justice, and distinguished from it as regulating the relations of men towards the gods, while justice regulates those of men towards each other. Plato afterwards abandoned this standpoint; in the "Republic" he acknowledges only four virtues out of the five, and it is precisely piety that has disappeared. Not that he ever took up an attitude of indifference towards religion. The difference is simply this—that he has ceased to recognize a special sphere of duty having exclusive reference to the Deity or the divine. The change involves no diminution, rather an increase, of reverence for the Deity, which is more and more identified with the principle of good itself; it implies an ever-widening divergence from popular anthropomorphism. Piety, viewed in this light, becomes *a disposition of mind accompanying well-doing*, with a reference

towards the Source of all good. Sacrifice and prayer, so we may expand the thought suggested in the "Euthyphro," are valuable as expressions of such a disposition, when it has depth and sincerity; otherwise they are of no value at all.

With this changed conception of piety we can hardly avoid connecting the criticism bestowed on the myths, the rejection of those legends which presuppose among the gods, war, hate, enmity, and therefore the opposites of goodness and justice. The second book of the "Republic" here supplies a copious commentary to the curt text of the "Euthyphro." Criticism of the myths, and that rejection of anthropomorphism on which such criticism rests, had long ago found entrance into the schools of the philosophers. Xenophanes, as our readers will remember, had paved the way for them. Since then the ethical regeneration of religion, as we have shown by the example of the tragedians, had made continuous progress. But we may conjecture that Plato does more here than simply follow the stream of contemporary thought; that he is, in fact, specially influenced by Orphic doctrines. The "fall of the soul by sin" (cf. Vol. I. p. 128, *sqq.*) was meant to trace the origin of evil within the circle of human existence, back to free choice and individual initiative, and, to this extent at least, to relieve the Deity from responsibility for evil—a theory which, no doubt, also involved a limitation of divine power. These same paths of thought we shall see trodden by Plato.

But how was it possible for him—the attentive reader may perhaps ask—to distil out of accepted religious ideas, by the mere analysis of concepts, a new view of piety, alien to the national consciousness? Is everything quite square in this discussion? Certainly not, we reply, without, for all that, desiring to assail Plato's good faith by a single breath. He is under the spell of what we have taken the liberty to call the superstition of concepts. He fully believes that he is merely extracting from traditional judgments of value their genuine kernel, divested of contradictions and confusions, while, in reality, he is substituting for them something entirely different. There are two points at

which this process of unconscious transformation is clearly apparent.

Socrates, after suggesting that the concept of piety may be subsumed under that of justice, wins and keeps the assent of Euthyphro to this proposition. But in so doing he commits, as appears on closer examination, an act of logical violence. For the subordination in question is one which it is entirely impossible to deduce from the premisses supplied by the popular faith of which Euthyphro is the representative. One of the most keen-sighted interpreters of Plato, one, too, who has done much towards the elucidation of this dialogue, Hermann Bonitz, endeavoured to cloak the violent character of this procedure by ascribing to the Greek word which corresponds to our "justice" a wider meaning, "morality" in general. He also pointed to certain casual combinations of words, such as "pious and just," "pious and lawful," as proving how near to each other were the corresponding concepts in the mind of the Greeks. But neither expedient seems to us admissible. The family of words to which "just" and "justice" belong does indeed betray a tendency to stand for "right-doing" in general, but even then only in the sense of the social morality that regulates human relations. And the frequent occurrence of the formulas quoted, while it may rightly be held to prove the close affinity of the concepts in question, fails entirely to establish the particular relationship ascribed to them; for it was never the mode to connect genus and species by the word "and." Co-ordination and subordination are two indubitably different things; the popular mind may have agreed with the "Gorgias" in assuming the former relation, or with the "Euthyphro" in preferring the latter, but it cannot possibly have done both together.

We pass on to the second point—the discussion of the question whether the pious is pious because it is pleasing to the gods, or whether the gods are pleased with it because it is pious. The decision in favour of the second alternative is without doubt to be regarded as homage paid to human reason, on behalf of which a declaration of

autonomy is hereby put forth. But the mode in which this decision is arrived at is open, in our opinion, to grave logical objection. Plato is seeking to prove that the concept under investigation cannot have for its content that which is pleasing to, or loved by, the gods. To speak of something as "loved" implies, he contends, an object which is loved as well as a subject which loves, as much so in the case of loving as in that of leading or carrying. He then emphasizes the idea of causality, with the remark, that whether a thing is loved, led, or carried, there must be some reason for it. All this may be quite true and yet not involve the conclusion, which is tacitly but unmistakably drawn from it, that the content of piety is something independent of the mere will and pleasure of divine beings. The possibility remains open that the object loved by the gods may be that quality of submissiveness to divine commands which is common to certain actions and dispositions of mind. This is the position—logically unassailable—which many believers in revealed religion have taken up. He who believes he has sufficient guarantee for the authenticity of particular announcements of the divine will, and who further feels himself constrained to obey that will, whether by fear, by hope, by love, or a combination of motives—such a one will decide the question in the sense rejected by Plato. Like certain nominalists of the Middle Ages, he may renounce all attempts to rationalize the idea of piety; he may frankly admit the "omnipotence of the divine pleasure," and yet affirm that, whatever may be the outcome of the divine will, obedience to that will, or "what is pleasing to God," comprises for him the whole content of piety.

The above was already written, when my attention was called to the surprising parallel presented to the fundamental thoughts of the "Euthyphro" by Kant's "Religion within the Limits of Unassisted Reason." If the thinker of Königsberg had desired to illustrate Plato's dialogue, he could hardly have expressed himself otherwise than in the following passage, which was written without any reference to it:—

"Religion is the recognition of all our duties as divine commands. . . . By this generic definition of religion provision is made against the erroneous notion that it is an aggregate of *particular* duties, having immediate reference to God, and we are guarded from the assumption that in addition to the *civic* duties of man towards man, there is an obligation to render *court-services*, and that zeal in the latter may possibly atone for neglect of the former. In a universal religion there are no special duties towards God; He can receive nothing from us; we cannot act either upon Him or in His behalf. If any one finds such a duty in the reverence due to God, he does not reflect that this is no particular act of religion, but a religious temper accompanying all our acts of duty without distinction."

3. The second of the two dialogues which we feel compelled to place after the "Gorgias," while deficient in the well-rounded symmetry of the first, is no less full of matter. Indeed, the "Meno" may perhaps be said to suffer from repletion; it is possibly the exuberant wealth of thought that has injured its artistic form. Without any word of preparation or introduction, the young Thessalian Meno puts to Socrates the question, "Can you tell me whether virtue can be taught, or whether it is acquired by practice, or whether it comes to man in some third way, whether by natural endowment or otherwise?" Socrates declares his inability to answer the question. How could he know how virtue is acquired, when the very nature of virtue is still for him a matter of uncertainty. Meno, however, who in his own country has enjoyed the instruction of Gorgias, will doubtless be more exactly informed on this point. The youth takes up the challenge by defining the virtue of man as civic efficiency, and that of woman as obedience to her husband and skill in housekeeping. He intimates his readiness to go on and delimit, in like manner, the virtue of the free man and the slave, of the boy, the girl, and the greybeard. Socrates, however, does not want to be introduced to a "swarm of virtues," but to virtue itself in its unity. This, according to Meno, is the capacity

of ruling men. Against this definition two objections are raised. It is not applicable to the virtue of the boy or the slave, and, even within the sphere of its applicability, it stands in need of limitation: rule must always be exercised in accordance with justice. But justice is itself *a* virtue, and cannot, therefore, serve in the definition of virtue in general. As such logical refinements are strange to Meno, the ethical investigation is interrupted by a discussion of a different subject, which is meant to be a sort of preparatory training. The concepts of form and colour are subjected to examination, and form is stated to be that which is always associated with colour. This definition is rejected as implying a reference to that which is as yet unknown. The following is then proposed as a pattern of correct definition: "Form is the limit of the corporeal." It is now the turn of colour; the definition offered is that of Gorgias, and rests on the Empedoclean physics: "Colour is an efflux of the corporeal, corresponding to sight (that is, to the pores in the organ of vision), and affecting perception." This definition is criticized as being high-sounding, but in reality inferior to the second definition of form—perhaps on the ground that it relates to the physical conditions of the colour-sensation, not the sensation itself.

A return is now made to the ethical subject, and Meno professes agreement with certain words of a lyric poet: "To rejoice in the beautiful and to be capable of it." The context of this phrase is not known to us, but it can hardly have meant anything else than, "Receptivity for all that is beautiful (noble, good), combined with the corresponding active faculties." From these words of the poet the young Thessalian is represented as extracting, not without some violence, a definition of the virtuous man: it is the man who desires the beautiful, or honourable, and is able to obtain it. This attempt is analyzed with thoroughness. First of all, the beautiful or honourable is identified with the good. Then follows the assertion, in conformity with the Socratic teaching, that no one ever desires what is evil, knowing it to be such. The distinguishing excellence of the virtuous cannot, therefore, consist in the universal desire

for what is good; and the main weight of the definition is now made to rest on the second clause, which relates to the acquisition of the good. But this acquisition must be by means which piety and justice allow; thus, as justice is itself a part of virtue, we are once more landed in a vicious circle. The definition includes a reference to a part of the thing to be defined. Meno here launches into a complaint against the Socratic manner. He has now learnt by personal experience, so he declares, what he had often before heard from others—that Socrates is only able to confuse and to disconcert. He compares the Socratic cross-examination to the electric shock of a torpedo. This fish benumbs those whom it touches; and similarly he, Meno, is "benumbed in mouth and soul," and does not know what to answer. He now understands why Socrates never leaves his native place. Abroad, he might very easily find himself on his trial for witchcraft. Socrates replies that the comparison with the torpedo would be appropriate only if that fish were itself numb and communicated its own condition to others. For he is himself a searcher, and does no more than impart to others a perplexity which is first his own. His expression of readiness to continue the search and investigation is met by Meno with the proposition that search and investigation are impossibilities. The object sought is either already known, and then the search is unnecessary; or else it is not known, and then the searcher will not recognize it, even if he finds it.

Our readers will remember a certain sceptical utterance of Xenophanes to which the second part of this proposition bears a strong resemblance—a resemblance which appears with the greatest clearness in the original Greek. At the same time, they will not have forgotten that this scepticism of Xenophanes was limited to the domain of the super-sensual, in regard to which verification is beyond our reach. Though Socrates, rightly enough, applies the epithet "eristic" to the proposition thus generally stated, he at the same time takes it in serious earnest, and opposes to it the doctrine of Reminiscence, which, in its turn, he founds on the dogma of immortality and the transmigration of souls.

He cites lines of the poet Pindar, to the Orphic-Pythagorean content of which he joins the inference that the soul, in the course of its pilgrimage, has seen all and experienced all, so that all seeking and learning is nothing else than recollection. There is no impossibility, "seeing that the whole of nature is inwardly related, and the soul has learnt everything," in the supposition that a single memory may be basis enough for the recovery, by courageous and indefatigable search, of all that has been forgotten. Meno is incredulous, but the truth of the assertion is made clear to him by an example. His young slave is called forward, geometrical figures are drawn in the sand, and the boy is led, entirely by the method of question and answer, to acknowledge, or rather to enounce spontaneously, a few elementary propositions in geometry. The inference is drawn that by the same means he may attain to the understanding, not only of geometry, but of all science; and that, since no positive instruction is imparted, but a knowledge of which he was previously unconscious, is, as it were, elicited from him, this knowledge must have been slumbering in his soul, and he must have acquired it in a former existence.

The investigation is assisted in yet another manner by the geometer. The latter does not always return a direct answer to a given question, but sometimes pronounces a problem solvable on a particular assumption. The main problem of the dialogue, "Can virtue be taught?" is treated in a similar way. Virtue, it is affirmed, can be taught if it is a kind of wisdom or knowledge. The validity of the hypothesis is proved as follows: Virtue is a good in all circumstances. All goods are useful. But they can only be useful when rightly used. This is true, not only of such goods as health, strength, beauty, riches; qualities of the soul, courage, for example, are no less capable of doing harm as well as good, according to the use made of them. Right use, however, is conditioned by knowledge. "All activities and operations of the soul issue in happiness, when they are guided by wisdom, and in the opposite of happiness when they are guided by folly." If, then, virtue

is a quality of the soul, and is at the same time necessarily useful, it must be wisdom.

The goal of the investigation thus appears to have been reached by an indirect path; and not only the possibility of teaching virtue, but also its essence, seem to be established. But the spirit of doubt awakes once more. This time it takes a form with which our study of the "Protagoras" has already made us familiar. If a subject can be taught, must there not be teachers and students of it? At this point Anytus appears, most opportunely, as Socrates says, and seats himself by the interlocutors. (We catch here a glimpse of the same stage-setting that has already done duty so often: a semicircle or other resting-place in some locality accessible to the public, probably in the ante-room or the precincts of a gymnasium.) The new-comer is the son of the rich and sensible Anthemion, a man who has acquired his wealth, not by gift, like the Theban Ismenias, lately enriched by Persian bribes, but by his own industry and ability. The son of such a father has no doubt been well brought up, and has received a good education; how else would the Athenians have placed him in the highest posts? Here is a man who may be fitly questioned about teachers of virtue, and who will be able to say whether there are any or not. Thus Anytus, who is, moreover, bound to Meno by ties of hospitality, is drawn into the discussion.

The dialogue now descends from the heights of abstract generality to the lower levels of actual facts. Asked whether the teachers sought for may not be found in the sophists, Anytus, who holds that class of men in abhorrence, answers by an outburst of violent abuse, introduced, doubtless, for the purpose of displaying the speaker's irritable temper and his hostility to culture—an hostility which will one day make him the accuser of Socrates. The sophists, however, who are not followers of Socrates, and who, in respect of fundamental ethical problems, are no wiser than their public, are not accepted by Plato, any more than by Anytus, as the true and genuine teachers of virtue. These are now sought for in a new quarter—in the ranks of the

great statesmen. Thus we are faced once more by the second of the difficulties raised in the "Protagoras:" Why do statesmen not impart their own virtue and excellence to their sons after them? For our attention is a second time called to the failure of paternal education; moreover, four statesmen are mentioned by name whose sons have remained far in the rear of their fathers' greatness. The selection of instances exhibits, in part, a remarkable agreement with the "Gorgias," and, in part, a no less remarkable divergence. Anytus follows the discussion with growing uneasiness—doubtless because his own son is anything but a triumph of education. His irritation at length finds expression in an exhortation to prudence, or rather in an unmistakable threat, which he addresses to Socrates. The two are once more alone, and the result of the discussion, in its present stage, is pronounced self-contradictory. Two equally cogent syllogisms confront each other in unappeasable opposition:—

1. Virtue is knowledge;
   Knowledge can be taught:
   Therefore virtue can be taught.
2. Knowledge can be taught;
   Virtue cannot be taught:
   Therefore virtue is not knowledge.

But here this dilemma is not the last word of the investigation. Not in vain have complaints been voiced against the resultless and purely negative character of Socratic discussions. A way of escape from the irreconcilable antinomies is provided by the distinction between scientific knowledge and right opinion. The former is, and remains, "by far the more valuable." Its greater worth rests on its permanence. But right opinion, when it is present in the mind, may replace the rarer and less easily attainable possession. If we are seeking the way to Larissa, Meno's home, and no one is at hand who has already passed over the road and knows it well, good service may yet be rendered us by a guide who, without knowledge, has right

opinion. The only difference is that opinions are fugitive ; they run away from the mind as a slave from his master, and they must be bound fast before they can attain their full value. The work of binding them is performed by the apprehension of grounds or causes, which, assisted by the Reminiscence already spoken of, transforms the fleeting opinions into permanent knowledge. The successful statesmen who, as has already been seen, are unable to impart their own excellence to others, do not possess scientific knowledge, but only right opinion. In this they resemble soothsayers and poets, to whom right opinion comes as a divine gift.

A solution has thus been found for a part, though not the whole, of the difficulties raised. For the remainder, as the disputants admit, a solution is still to seek, and it is urged that the question, "Can virtue be taught?" cannot rightly receive a final answer until the nature of virtue has been ascertained. With these admissions, and with the significant request, addressed to Meno, that he will bring his friend Anytus to a gentler frame of mind—a change "which will be to the advantage of the Athenians"—we reach the end of the dialogue, on which not a little yet remains to be said.

4. The "Meno" is for us a biographical document of no mean rank. Here for the first time we, in a manner, find ourselves sitting at Plato's feet. For the dialogue bears the unmistakable stamp of its author's vocation. His mind is busy with questions of method, and these constitute for him a link between widely separated provinces of knowledge (hypothetical reasoning). He arranges a preparatory exercise, in which the pupil is braced for his attack upon a more difficult problem (the definition of form). His work as teacher has broadened his horizon ; the dialectical student of ethics has become a thinker whose survey embraces a number of particular sciences. He already knows by experience the propædeutic value of mathematical instruction. He has observed with astonishment how the deductive procedure leads the pupil to results which he almost appears to spin out of himself, thus displaying a

knowledge which has never been communicated to him. Nor are these the only instances in which the practice of teaching has introduced him to new problems. He has been led to question the possibility of learning and teaching in general. Thus he has been conducted to a theory of knowledge of which his earlier works—apart from an isolated hint in the "Gorgias" (corporeality as an impediment to knowledge)—present no trace. "His earlier works," we say, and we are prepared to prove that the phrase is no empty assertion. This same proof, however, is bound up most intimately with the question as to the true aim of the dialogue.

The "Meno" is a point of junction in the scheme of Plato's writings. In it threads are gathered together which proceed from two different dialogues. Two such threads stretch across from the "Protagoras." There, as here, we find discussed the two problems: (1) How can virtue be knowledge, and therefore communicable by teaching, when it is impossible to point to any teachers of it? (2) How, on the same hypothesis, can the fact be explained that excellent statesmen do not educate their sons to equal excellence with themselves? In the "Meno," as we have seen, the second of these difficulties finds its solution; and it is precisely this circumstance (as was long ago perceived by Schleiermacher) which establishes the relative dates of the two dialogues beyond controversy. For it would be a sheer absurdity to lay afresh before the reader a problem which had already been solved. Closely connected with the fundamental distinction between "scientific knowledge" and "right opinion," there meets us that more indulgent judgment of Athenian statesmen which offers so noteworthy a contrast with the venomous scorn poured out upon them in the "Gorgias." This contrast could not fail to attract attention permanently; and, since these are no writings of a 'prentice hand, it was without doubt intended to be noticed. In the present, as in the former dialogue, four statesmen of the first rank are named; two of them are the same in both, the two others vary in accordance with the needs of the context. In the "Gorgias" the

statesmen are declared to have exercised no influence whatever for good ; in the "Meno" they are still accorded no more than the second place after the philosophers, but there is no more contemptuous brushing aside of names held in universal respect. Which is the more probable hypothesis? That Plato intentionally emphasized his advance from a moderate to an immoderate paradox, and his abandonment of the well-thought out, carefully constructed theory on which the former rested? Or that he desired to give the reader a sufficiently intelligible hint that he had at last learnt to mitigate and limit an extravagant opinion, which wounded the strongest feelings of his countrymen? The latter, without a doubt; and for this reason the "Meno" must be put later, not only than the "Protagoras," but also than the "Gorgias."

Here we may give expression to a conjecture that this "apology" to the statesmen of Athens is nothing less than the main feature and *raison d'être* of the whole dialogue. It occupies the closing portion of the work, and remains in our minds as a parting impression. From this point of view, too, the general plan of the dialogue may be explained. For the purposes of a palinode to the "Gorgias" —to use a strong, perhaps too strong, expression—there was need of an appropriate form, one which should spare the author's self-respect as much as possible. Accordingly, the plan commended itself to him of tacking his retractation to a discussion of the second of the difficulties raised in the "Protagoras." It is true that in the last-named work Plato almost certainly inclined to the opinion that the statesmen were lacking in wisdom, and that their manifold failures as educators helped to prove the fact. But he had by no means expressed that opinion with the same harsh bluntness as in the "Gorgias;" rather he had appeared to leave the decision hanging in the balance. Thus it was easy for an ingenious author, never at a loss for an expedient, to make a show of returning to the question, as one still unanswered, in a dialogue the personages of which are represented, not, we may be sure, without a deep-lying reason, as hungering for positive solutions, as weary of everlasting banter and

mystification. The famous image of the torpedo is not, in our opinion, applicable to the historical Socrates alone. Plato himself, at the threshold of the positive portion of the dialogue, allows himself to be swayed by the long unsatisfied desires of his readers, and presents them with the expositions which so fully occupy the remainder of the work. And although the latter are by no means destitute of independent interest (when did Plato ever write anything that was?), the goal to which they all lead is the above-mentioned "apology" to the statesmen.

We have still to consider the objection that this apology is meant ironically—an unfortunate conjecture of Schleiermacher's, which we need not controvert at great length. Praise ironically meant must, before everything else, be inappropriate or exaggerated. But what contemporary of Plato, in particular what Athenian, could have viewed in that light the position assigned to Athenian statesmen in the "Meno," where they rank as second to the "philosophers;" that is, to Socrates and his disciples? "A truly strange order of merit," ninety-nine out of a hundred readers would probably exclaim, "and one which is anything but just to our great men!" That more than justice had been done to them, is an idea which not even the hundredth reader would have entertained for a moment. How, in such circumstances, was the idea of irony to occur to any one? Was it possibly suggested by the personality of the men whom Plato chose as representatives of their class? This point deserves a little consideration.

Of the four men whom Plato condemns so mercilessly in the "Gorgias," two—Themistocles and Pericles—reappear without change; two others—Miltiades and Cimon—are now necessarily passed over. Miltiades, the eminent father of an eminent son, could not appropriately be mentioned in a context which starts from the question: Why do great statesmen not leave equally great sons behind them? Cimon, too, had to disappear, for the reason, if for no other, that it would have been the height of literary ineptitude to call attention, by naming the son even without the father, to the one exception to the rule which

the author is maintaining. Whom, then, do we find in the two places thus vacated? Thucydides, the son of Melesias, and—Aristides! This last name decides once for all the question we are considering. And it would be equally decisive of the point even if Plato had not taken care to close up, as we may say, every avenue of error by the warm and unstinted praise which, in the "Gorgias" itself, that work so hostile to the statesmen, he bestows upon the "just" son of Lysimachus.

Nor does it seem impossible to explain the difference in tone and in attitude towards practical politics which distinguishes the "Meno" from the "Gorgias." In the latter, the keynote is flight from the world, and a defiant turning away from reality; in the former there is an endeavour to do justice in some measure to actual society and its more prominent representatives. In the one we see a high-flying contempt of any and every compromise; in the other a search—often to be repeated—for a middle course, a workable substitute for the intellectual and moral perfection which is so hard of attainment. The voice which speaks to us in the "Gorgias" is that of a disciple cut to the quick by the attack upon his master, of an author whose hands are still free, and whose project of founding a school has been but lately conceived. Or, possibly, he has just entered upon the work, his bosom swelled with proud and measureless hopes which no experience has as yet taught him to moderate. He is ridiculed for an unheard of enterprise, deemed unworthy of his noble birth, and reproached for his avoidance of public life, his wasting of rich gifts on logic-chopping and word-picking in the petty arena of his lecture-hall. Against all which scorn and reproach, on the part of friends and kinsmen perhaps still more than of opponents, he puts on the armour of inflexible obstinacy.

A few years have passed. The young school thrives, though not without conflicts. To the master's feet there throng ambitious youths, anxious to possess themselves of the weapons needful for political strife. The interests of the new institution, the demands it is required to fulfil, the

quarrels it has to sustain, form so many links binding its director closer to life. The charge of estrangement from the world no longer leaves him indifferent. His self-appreciation has become surer and more moderate; for which reason it now finds less violent expression. Nor is caution still a despised virtue for him; rivals are busily spying out every joint in his harness. May we not discern in this phase of Plato's emotional life—a phase to be followed by others of very different kinds—the soil out of which the "Meno" sprang?

To the threads which connect our dialogue with the "Protagoras" and the "Gorgias" there is joined another which stretches forward to the "Phædo." I mean the retrospective reference in the last-named dialogue to the doctrine of Reminiscence and to the exposition of it given in the "Meno." Schleiermacher was fully justified in saying that the author of the "Phædo" alludes to the "Meno" "perhaps more definitely and more explicitly than in any other place to any earlier work." We are thus brought to the works in which the doctrine of ideas is expounded, and to these the next few sections will be devoted.

CHAPTER VII.

PLATO'S "SYMPOSIUM."

1. ARISTOTLE speaks in a certain passage of Plato's "love-speeches." The allusion is to the "Symposium;" still, the same designation might have been applied with almost equal propriety to the greater part of the "Phædrus." So intimately connected in subject are these two dialogues, which we are under the necessity of treating separately. In both, considerable space is taken up by that particular variety of erotic sentiment which played so large a part in Greek life, and to which we are obliged to devote a few observations, chiefly historical, if the content of the two dialogues is to be understood aright.

Two years before his death, Goethe expressed himself to the Chancellor Müller in a manner which the latter reports as follows: "He explained the true origin of that aberration by the fact that, judged by the purely æsthetic standard, man is far more beautiful, more excellent, nearer to perfection than woman. Such a feeling, he said, having once arisen, easily acquires a brutal, grossly material character. The love of boys is as old as humanity, and may be said to be contained in nature, although it is against nature." But, of course, "the advances which civilization has made upon nature must be held firmly and not abandoned on any account."

Besides this æsthetic point of view, there are other factors to be taken into consideration, of which the first is that determination towards the male sex of the natural instinct which occurs in the military life of primitive

peoples, and under various other conditions involving scarcity of women. The great antiquity of this tendency in the Greek race, particularly in the Dorian branch of it, is attested by prehistoric rock-inscriptions on the island of Thera, as also by deeply rooted customs of the Cretans and Spartans. But there is also an ideal factor of considerable strength which comes into play here—the relation of fidelity between protector and protected, gratitude for deliverance from danger, admiration for superior courage, and that tender care of the younger and weaker, for which the vicissitudes of war and migration offer such manifold opportunity. Historical truth is here endangered by the utter strangeness, to the minds of at least the great majority among us, of this whole mode of feeling. In the case of all ancient personalities with whom we feel lively sympathy, words and actions having reference to the love of boys are almost inevitably watered down by us or explained away in a quite arbitrary manner; while we reject beforehand any reports of this character, not wholly free from doubt, which may be extant concerning them. It is necessary, therefore, to remember that the sentiment in question appeared in as many, if not more, varieties and gradations, than the love of women at the present day. Here, as elsewhere, a noble scion was often grafted upon a savage stock. Devotion, enthusiastic, intense, ideal, was not unfrequently the fruit of these attachments, the sensual origin of which was entirely forgotten. Similar phenomena are not uncommon to-day (we omit all reference to exceptionally constituted members of highly civilized communities) among the Albanians, whose ancestors, the Illyrians, were racially akin to the Hellenes. "The aspect of a beautiful boy"—thus Johann Georg Hahn, the author of "Albanian Studies," reproduces the utterances of a son of the soil—"is purer than sunshine. . . . It is the highest and strongest passion of which the human breast is capable. . . . When the loved one appears unexpectedly before him, he changes colour. . . . He has eyes and ears only for his beloved. He does not venture to touch him with his hand; he kisses him only on the brow; he sings

his verses in his honour only, never in that of a woman." Soon we shall hear similar accents from Plato's lips.

But even where this erotic sentiment is not entirely ennobled and transfigured, it is often restrained and held in check by strong opposing forces. The Spartan king Agesilaus, whose feelings and behaviour may be taken as typical of the best society of his country, was highly susceptible to boyish beauty. But he strove, with all the power at his command, not to make the least concession to the impulses which were thus excited in him. Not for all the gold in the world, so his companion Xenophon makes him say on one occasion, would he renew the conflict which he once sustained victoriously, when he refrained from kissing a boy whose beauty had bewitched him. Such austere severity was far removed from the laxer temper of the poet Sophocles, who, as his contemporary Ion relates, when staying in the island of Chios, once enticed to himself by a playful artifice a boy who had just given him to drink, and stole a kiss from him. Here, in all probability, the erotic impulse itself was weaker, as well as the resistance offered to it. One might almost speak of trifling gallantry, as opposed to strong, but bridled, passion. From such examples we may learn that it is folly to pass wholesale judgments on the phenomenon of "Greek love," to see in some cases mere brutal instinct, in others entire freedom from such inclinations, and thus to divide ancient humanity into two sharply distinguished groups. It is true that we find different epochs wearing very different aspects in regard to this question.

In the picture of society which the Homeric poems spread before us, the love of boys has left no trace. In importing this element into the friendship of Achilles and Patroclus, a later age did violence to the ancient poem. The romantic love of woman was also but scantily represented in epic literature, as in the early Greek world in general. The germs of it, which lay scattered in local sagas, were not to burst into flower before the age of Hellenistic literature. Still, the relations of men and women are penetrated by a warmth and tenderness which

becomes more and more foreign to the sentiment of succeeding ages. It would be in vain, for example, to seek a parallel to the parting of Hector and Andromache in tragic poetry. Moreover, the influences which brought about what we may call the depreciation of woman are not difficult to discover. As Ionic civilization tended more and more towards the Oriental fashion of secluding women, as rural life lost ground before city life, as democracy drew ever-increasing numbers within its pale, and the growing interest of politics made rhetoric and dialectic the favourite occupations of men—as, in a word, the life of the sexes became divided by an ever-widen inginterval, these changes were accompanied by a corresponding diminution in the dignity and significance of woman, and in the respect paid to her by the men of at least the higher strata of society. "We marry in order that we may beget legitimate children, and know that our households are left in the keeping of some one we can trust"—this typical saying sufficiently characterizes the ordinary Greek, or at any rate Athenian marriage, which in most cases was a marriage of convenience. And at the epoch with which we are here concerned, this process was steadily advancing. In the narrative of Herodotus women play important, often decisive, parts, and not unfrequently inspire passionate devotion. In Thucydides, on the other hand, there is so little mention of wives, or of women in general, that the reader sometimes feels as though he had been transported into a community consisting exclusively of males, a sort of inverted Amazon republic. And if we find a somewhat different picture in the pages of Xenophon, we must reflect that the works of this much-travelled soldier are no true mirror of Athenian life and sentiment. Into the void thus created, a void rather which, so far as the romance of love is concerned, had existed from the beginning, there now intrudes that form of erotic feeling which we have already encountered, and of which the "Phædrus" and the "Symposium," together with their prelude, the "Lysis," afford us so ample a view.

First of all the "Lysis." The matter of this dialogue

need not trouble us; we shall find it developed to greater richness and maturity in the brilliant luminary of which this work is the modest satellite. But the introduction, extending as it does to unusual, one might almost say to undue length, is in this connexion of inestimable value. The ardent, yet reverential devotion of Hippothales to the beautiful Lysis, his changes of colour, his manner of hiding himself and hanging with admiring glances on every movement of his beloved,—all this forms a finished picture, contrasting with the similar but fugitive touches of other dialogues. Here, too, Plato opens up to us a completer view of the inner workings of the gymnasia, the true nursery-grounds of affection between beautiful boys, whose beauty was there displayed unveiled, and their companions of a slightly greater age. A series of life-like *tableaux* passes before us: a troop of begarlanded youths offering sacrifice to Hermes, whose festival is being kept; another group amusing themselves with dice in a corner of the hall; in the background, the aged slaves employed to take charge of the boys, warning them with growing insistence that it is time to go home, and grumbling at the long delay in their foreign jargons.

2. The theory of love, however, is the subject of one of the most magnificent works of art that Plato's pen ever produced—the "Symposium." Agathon, the still youthful tragic poet, has gained his first triumph on the stage (B.C. 416), and a select circle has assembled in his house to celebrate the event. As the same company met yesterday, and drank deeply in the victor's honour, it is resolved that to-day the wine-cup shall be enjoyed moderately, and with no compulsion. The flute-girl is dismissed; speeches in praise of the god of love are to provide the entertainment. Phædrus, the proposer of the idea, opens the contest.

Foremost among the benefits which Eros confers on mankind, is the sense of honour. The lover is nowhere so ashamed of a cowardly or mean action as in the presence of the object of his affection. A state or an army, that should consist only of lovers and loved, would be invincible. Not men only, but even women, are willing to die for those

whom they love. As an instance, Alcestis is mentioned, who was ready to face death for her husband Admetus. Then follows more accessory matter of a mythological character. The speech ends with the praise of the god as the oldest and the most honourable of the gods, as well as the most helpful towards the attainment of virtue and happiness.

The next speech reported is that of Pausanias. He reproaches his predecessor for confusing two different species of love. For love is twofold, just as there is a distinction between the heavenly and the common Aphrodite. The worshippers of the latter love women as well as boys, and in both they love the body more than the soul. But that love which is under the guardianship of the heavenly goddess is directed towards the sex which is by nature stronger and more capable of reason; moreover, it prefers youths to boys whose future development is still uncertain. It is those who occupy themselves with the latter who have caused it to be commonly said that it is disgraceful to show favour to a lover. The whole question, to be sure, lacks clear and certain regulation. Not in Elis and Bœötia (that is, among Greeks of Æolian descent), where the reproach just mentioned is never uttered. Nor yet in Ionia, nor in other lands where Greeks live under barbarian governments; for, to the barbarians, the love of boys, philosophy, and gymnastics are equally odious, seeing that their princes go in terror of high spirit and close friendship. But in Sparta and Athens the established rules are fluctuating and uncertain. It is of moment to ascertain their hidden significance. The truth is, that mere love of the body, which comes to an end with the bloom of youth, is bad; as also is, on the part of him who is loved, regard to external advantage, to wealth and power. Only when the two are bound together by the common pursuit of perfection, of wisdom, and the other parts of virtue, is their union profitable to them; and it is honourable to give ear to a lover for the sake of excellence.

The distinction contained in this second speech has

served to advance the division of the subject, and thus to prepare for its treatment later on by Socrates. The third speech, that of Eryximachus, now renders similar service by enlarging the bounds of the discussion. It is perhaps also intended to mark the extreme point which had been reached by præ-Platonic speculation in this field. For it is on the philosophy of nature that the physician Eryximachus founds his reasoning. The art of medicine itself teaches us, in respect of bodily desires, to distinguish two kinds of love, according as they are directed towards what is wholesome or what is injurious, according as the appetite is healthy or diseased. Further, it is the physician's task to reconcile in friendship and love those elements in the body which are most inimical to each other, the opposites, namely, of warm and cold, moist and dry, and the like (cf. Vol. I. p. 148). Similar in kind is the procedure of gymnastics, of agriculture, and of music; in treating of which the speaker quotes Heraclitus. Here, too, that distinction between the heavenly love and the common has place, according as music, rhythm, and the cadence of verse engender lust and licence, or the seemly ordering of the soul. In the same way, the fruits of the earth depend for their thriving upon the right combination and harmonious fusion of the elemental opposites. All this is the work of the love that is "seemly," while the love that is wild and wanton proves fatal to the welfare of plants and animals alike. Finally, the art of divination is introduced as a go-between in the love of gods and men—a thought which to us seems violent to the point of scurrility, but was certainly not so regarded by Plato. For by making Socrates take up the idea again, along with others scattered through the earlier speeches, he impresses upon it the mark of his approbation. As for the part which he does not agree with, Plato may spare himself the trouble of criticizing it, because he has already done so in the "Lysis." In this dialogue the two natural theories of love, as we may call them—the attraction of like to like, and that of like to unlike—are discussed with reference to the teachings of the nature-philosophers (almost certainly Empedocles on

the one side and Heraclitus on the other). Both are rejected. The attraction of likes is objected to as at best a half-truth, for the more the bad communes with the bad the more hateful does his companion become to him Indeed, the predicate "like," as is added with some subtlety, cannot be applied to the individual bad man even in respect of himself; for he is altogether changeable and incalculable. Suppose, then, that by "likes" is meant the good only; even then a host of doubts remain. For like can gain from like nothing, good or bad, which he cannot gain from himself. If it be said that the good is friendly with the good, not as like, but as good; this, too, will not stand, for the good man is sufficient to himself. Nor does the opposite theory, the one represented by Eryximachus in our dialogue, fare any better. The objection raised against it is that there can be no friendship between love and hate, just and unjust, good and evil.

3. Then follow the speeches of the two poets, Aristophanes and Agathon, in which, as was to be expected, the jest far outweighs the earnest. Here, accordingly, we recognize such a resting-place as the artist-hand of Plato loved to prepare in the middle of his works.

The speech of the great comedian is filled with a grotesque humour worthy of the author of "Gargantua." Men were originally divided into three sexes; for besides men and women there were also men-women. They also possessed double bodies, which, being round and supported by four arms and four feet, were able to move with prodigious velocity. They were enormously strong, and full of pride, so that they threatened the very dominion of the gods. The latter, therefore, took counsel together, what should be done with man. Opinions were divided, for annihilation of the human race meant the loss of all sacrifices and offerings. At last Zeus came to the rescue with a suggestion. "Let us bisect mankind," he said, "then will each one of them be the weaker, and we shall receive all the more sacrifices." This was done. Men were sliced down the middle, as an egg is cut through

with a thread. Each half was now filled with yearning for its lost complement; and as the whole had originally belonged to one or other of the three sexes, so was the direction of this yearning determined. Hence arose the different species of lovers' desires—a subject which is treated at length and with no lack of plainness. Thus was produced the condition in which mankind now is. Whether the matter is to end here or not, remains uncertain. If we provoke the gods again by our impiety, then, it is to be feared, we shall be split a second time, and be left like the bas-reliefs which adorn gravestones. Meanwhile, we come nearest bliss when the yearnings just spoken of are fulfilled. Praise, therefore, be given to Eros, who, if we fail not in piety, will yet perhaps restore us to our original nature, and make us whole and happy. Even in this irreverent burlesque there is an element of serious thought. Desire for one's own was one of the current explanations of love, one which is fully discussed in the "Lysis," and which Socrates, when his turn comes to speak, will think not unworthy of refutation.

As a well-kept pleasure-garden differs from a park left to nature, so the trim, starched speech of Agathon contrasts with the wild exuberance of Aristophanes. The former speaks like a delicately trained orator of the school of Gorgias. His effort is as poor in profound thought as it is rich in subtle, ingenious, and seductive turns of expression. Eros is not, as Phædrus had said, the oldest, but rather the youngest of the gods. In support of this assertion a multitude of proofs are adduced. Not in his reign, but under his forerunner, "Necessity," were those wars of the gods, those mutilations and other violent deeds of which legend tells. He is young, too, because he flees from old age, whose all too rapid advance he far outstrips in his still more rapid flight. With his youthful age his softness and tenderness well agree. To all hard souls he is a stranger. By virtue of his suppleness he moulds himself upon the soul; thus his entrance and his departure are alike unperceived. He loves to dwell among flowers; where blossoms are and fragrance, there he alights and

makes his home. As Agathon is bent on ascribing to Eros all imaginable excellences, he is not afraid to number temperance among his attributes, playfully arguing that temperance is the mastery over pleasures and desires, and that the god of love is stronger than these. A little later, to be sure, he speaks of luxury as one of the gifts of love. To Eros, likewise, he refers the origin of all arts and sciences, seeing that they all have sprung from some longing or desire. He concludes with a series of artistically grouped clauses, plentifully adorned with rhymes and antitheses. Nor, lastly, does he fail to confess that in the speech just offered to the god, jest has been mingled with earnest.

Plato's knowledge of and power over artistic effect are, perhaps, nowhere displayed with so much brilliance as in this part of the work. It borders on the miraculous that *one* mind should have been capable of all these creations, in particular the two last. The contrast between the two speeches is obvious enough. But apart from this, calculation of the exactest sort is employed. The Socratic cross-examination, which follows, could have no better foil than Agathon's speech. The contradictions between the various discourses, and of the last with itself (Eros the oldest and also the youngest god, Eros the source both of temperance and of its opposite), cry aloud as it were for a discussion that will clear the air. The jingling peroration of Agathon strengthens this impression to the uttermost. The reader is sick of sweetmeats, and longs for plainer but more nourishing diet. And when at last the dialectic of Socrates leads him back to the heights of pathos and inspiration, the effect upon him is doubled by the contrast with the artificialities with which he has been sated.

4. Socrates remarks that he has evidently misunderstood the agreement. The previous speakers have merely set themselves to praise love, without regard to truth or falsehood. He desires to speak nothing but the truth, and he begins with a series of questions addressed to Agathon, of which the result may be summarized as follows: All love is love of something; something, moreover, of which one

stands in need. This object of love is either to be gained now, or, if possessed already, to be retained in the future. Eros is therefore necessitous ; and since it is beauty that he desires, and the beautiful is good, he is in need of the good. Now follows a dialogue within the dialogue. For Socrates affirms that the accurate knowledge which he possesses of the nature of Eros has been derived from the instruction of a prophetess, Diotima of Mantinea. The artifice is similar to that employed in the "Phædrus," where Socrates ascribes the inspiration, which he feels descending upon him, to the influence of the neighbouring sanctuary of the nymphs. The object sought is to justify the poetic flights of Plato as coming from the mouth of Socrates, as well as the exposition by the latter, a little further on, of a specifically Platonic doctrine.

He, too, had praised Eros as a great god and fair, exactly as Agathon has been doing, and Diotima had shown him his error by the same arguments which he has just repeated. Eros is in truth neither good nor fair, nor yet is he foul or evil, but something between the two. Further, he is no god at all ; but just as little is he a mortal. In this respect, too, he is a mean, a great spirit mediating between gods and men. Diotima next named to him the parents of Eros. These are Wealth and Poverty. They met on the birthday feast of Aphrodite, when Poverty stood begging at the door, and Wealth, who was drunk with nectar, lay slumbering in the garden of Zeus. To him then came Poverty, who wished to have a child by Wealth, and so conceived Eros. The latter is also a philosopher, that is, one who desires wisdom. For as he is neither poor nor rich, so is he also neither wise nor without understanding, but in a mean between the two. Now, the advantage which Eros brings to men is that he (as befits one conceived on the birthday of the goddess of beauty) teaches them to desire the beautiful. But among things beautiful is the good, and it is through possessing the good that the happy have obtained happiness. All men, at all times, desire the good ; and if it is not said that they always love, the reason is that by the name of

"love" a part is generally understood, and not the whole, much as the word "poetry" is used in a restricted sense of the making of verse, whereas its full meaning (ποίησις, from ποιεῖν, to make) includes all creating or making.

That, then, which men love is not their own, as Aristophanes thought; for a man is ready to have his own feet and hands hewn off if he thinks them useless. Desire is for the good, and, indeed, for the perpetual possession of the good. But this permanent and unbroken tenure is obtained by means of generation, which is both of body and of soul, and always takes place in the beautiful, since ugliness repels from generation. Love is thus directed, not towards the beautiful, but towards generation in the beautiful, and its aim is immortality. Diotima also referred him to the example of the animals, which for the sake of generation, and in the protection of their offspring, are ready to fight against the most unequal odds. Nor is it in any essentially different manner that continuity and permanence are secured in the individual, within whom there is unceasing change. He is, indeed, spoken of as one, but the greybeard is in no part of himself the same as when he was a child. Nor yet is it only flesh and blood, and bone and hair, that come and go in endless succession; the same holds also of the things of the soul—of character and disposition, of opinions, desires, sorrow, joy, fear, and even knowledge, the passing away of which is called forgetting, and the continuance of which is only apparently made possible by exercise—in reality, new knowledge takes the place of that which has been lost. This, indeed, is the only means whereby things mortal may abide; that which is old and worn out must leave behind it something new and other than itself, though of the same kind.

Socrates was astonished by this teaching, but the wise Diotima bade him look also upon the ambition of man—that hunger for an immortal name and an undying memory by which the best of men are moved to do the greatest deeds. Such men are they whose souls, rather than their bodies, are filled with the impulse towards generation, and who desire to bring into the world that

which is of the same pattern as their own souls—wisdom and all virtue. To this class belong poets and other creative artists. The greatest and fairest part of wisdom is that which has to do with the ordering of cities and families; the name of it is Temperance and Justice. He who is seized by such longing seeks the beautiful, in order to engender in it; and if he finds a fair body inhabited by a fair, noble, and richly gifted soul, he rejoices greatly at the union. At once he breaks forth into discourse of virtue and of what things are excellent in man: thus he begins to form the youth. By this means there is woven round the two a stronger bond than that of husband and wife. Their offspring, too, is fairer and more immortal; it is such offspring as Homer fathered, or Hesiod, or great law-givers like Solon and Lycurgus. For the sake of such offspring, not for their mortal posterity, men have had temples raised to them.

Diotima next turned to the perfected mysteries of love, and expressed a doubt whether Socrates would be able to follow her. For it now became necessary, she said—the youthful love of a fair body being taken as a starting-point—to acknowledge that the beauty of any one body is own sister to the beauty of any other; that it would be folly not to allow the beauty of all bodies to be one and the same. He who acknowledges this begins to love *all* fair bodies; but the vehemence of his love for *one* is abated. Next, he regards beauty in the soul as higher than that of body, and, in consequence, the superior soul is sufficient object for his love and care, even when attended with little physical charm, and draws forth from him the teachings which help youth towards perfection. He is thus constrained to behold beauty in actions and in character, and to confess that here, too, all beauty is akin, so that henceforth beauty of body is but a small thing in his eyes. From action he passes on to knowledge, in order that he may discern the beauty of the sciences. He now ceases entirely from gazing in slavish subjection on the beauty of a boy, a man, or an action; instead, the whole ocean of beauty is spread before him; and again he brings to the

birth fair and noble teaching, until, strengthened thereby and grown to full stature, he perceives one only science, which is the science of the beautiful.

But having thus arrived at the goal of his love's journey, he suddenly becomes aware of something marvellous in its essence, beautiful, and itself the archetype of all beauty. This "ever is, and neither becomes nor decays, neither increases nor diminishes; it is not in part fair, in part foul nor fair at some times, foul at others; it is not fair by one comparison and foul by another, nor fair to some and foul to other eyes. He will not now figure to himself the beautiful as having form, as a face or other part of the body, nor yet as teaching or knowledge, nor as existing in something other than itself, . . . but as something which exists in itself and for itself, and is everywhere the same. All else that is beautiful has part in it in such wise that while these other things arise and pass, itself is neither increased thereby nor diminished, nor suffers any manner of change." This ascent, however, which leads step by step to the "sight of the beautiful itself, pure, absolute, and unmixed, not laden with flesh and colour and the other lumber of humanity," is also the way to a life of virtue, to friendship with God and immortality. Socrates declares that by Diotima's words he was convinced—a conviction which he is now endeavouring to impart to others—"that human nature has no better help in this quest than Eros."

Just as Aristophanes is addressing himself to answer, a troop of revellers bursts into the house. At their head is Alcibiades, a flute-girl on his arm, a thickly woven garland of ivy and violets and a mass of ribands on his head. With these he begins to adorn Agathon, in honour of his victory. Suddenly, and not without alarm, he perceives Socrates. After the exchange of a few friendly jests, he delivers an encomium upon Socrates, whom he also decks with ribands. His speech exhibits a strange mixture of emotions—fear, devotion, shame, admiration. He has always desired to flee from Socrates, as from the voice of his own conscience, but the siren-song of the philosopher always entices him back. He has often wished that

Socrates were no longer among the living, and yet he is certain he would feel the loss of him as a grievous misfortune. His praise of Socrates (cf. pp. 47, 72) culminates in a narrative which exhibits in the clearest light his master's abstinence and self-control—in short, his temperance; while the frank candour of the speaker, excessive for any but a half-drunken man, moves the loud laughter of the company. The banquet draws to a close. Some of the guests take their departure; others fall asleep. The first cock-crow finds none left but Socrates, Agathon, and Aristophanes, who are eagerly discussing the nature of dramatic art. At last Aristophanes is overpowered by fatigue; Agathon a little later, when the dawn is well advanced. Socrates alone holds out. He now walks to the Lyceum, where he takes a bath. After that he spends the day in his usual occupations, and it is not till evening that he seeks rest in his own house.

That Plato is an artist may be seen in almost every line that he has written; in the "Symposium" he claims the title for himself, by preaching the cult of beauty. The dialectician and the moralist, which sometimes seek to stifle the poet in him, here pass into the background, or rather are enlisted into the service of metaphysical poesy. It may be confidently affirmed that in this work Plato is more himself than in others. He no longer appears as a mere disciple of Socrates; and he is just as little an adherent of the Orphic-Pythagorean doctrines, with which the endeavour after a merely vicarious immortality is in direct contradiction. May we infer a date for the composition of the work? Probably only to the extent of placing the dialogue, which was written after 384, later than the series of purely Socratic writings (an allusion to the "Charmides" well accords with this), but not to the extent of placing it before all the writings which show traces of Orphic-Pythagorean influence. Against such a supposition may be set the single fact that a result worked out in the "Meno"—"right opinion" as something intermediate between knowledge and ignorance—is here seized upon and employed in the discussion as if

it were a self-evident truth. But the modes of thought acquired in Lower Italy have not yet gained so great a hold upon him that he cannot, under the influence of a powerful impulse, throw off the fetters for a time. And, in truth, it must have been a powerful impulse in obedience to which the author of the "Symposium" placed himself in fundamental contradiction to the views expressed both in his earlier and his later works. What a chasm yawns between the judgment here pronounced upon the poets and the estimate of them contained in the "Gorgias," between the justification of ambition in this dialogue and its rejection in the "Republic," not to speak of love itself, which in the "Theætetus" is ignored, along with its significance for study and the formation of youth, and which, in the "Phædo," is scorned, along with everything else that has its origin in sense—while, here, it is a ladder on the rungs of which the earnest striver may climb to the sight of the sublimest visions, and thereby be brought near to moral perfection and the likeness of God! But it is time to inquire into the inner structure of this remarkable work.

What link, it may be asked, joins the "love-speeches" which form the main portion of the dialogue, to Alcibiades' hymn in praise of Socrates, which brings up the rear? This apparently accidental after-thought is, in our opinion, the true root from which the whole work sprang. The praise of Socrates, indeed, is a theme which Plato is always ready and willing to enlarge upon. But he had a definite motive and occasion for placing such praise in the mouth of Alcibiades—we refer to the pamphlet of Polycrates, already mentioned by us more than once, the effect of which was felt for so long. This writer had spoken of Socrates as the teacher of Alcibiades—in what tone and with what intention can easily be guessed. In a similar manner Prodicus and Anaxagoras had been reproached for having educated Theramenes and Pericles respectively (cf. Vol. I. pp. 426, 582). But while the memory of Theramenes was honoured by many, and that of Pericles by most, Alcibiades, in spite of the admiration inspired by his personality and genius, was all but universally reprobated for the ruin he brought upon

the Athenian Empire. Xenophon labours for pages together, after his own somewhat clumsy fashion, in the cause of the defence. He acknowledges, not without reluctance, that Socrates might perhaps have done better to instruct both Alcibiades and Critias in self-control first and in politics afterwards; still, his example, Xenophon contends, exercised the best of influence on the two young and ambitious men, as long as their intercourse with him lasted; it was afterwards that Alcibiades was corrupted, by life, by women, by foreign potentates, by the Athenian people itself, all through no fault of Socrates. What a different method is that of Plato!

Instead of meeting the charge directly, he presents the reader with a life-like portrait of Alcibiades, whom he introduces describing his relations to Socrates with the proverbial truthfulness of wine, and in a manner which disarms the accusation: "He compels me to acknowledge that all the time I am busy over the concerns of the Athenians I am myself full of imperfections, which I neglect to remedy. . . . Therefore I run away from him and avoid him, and, when I see him, I am ashamed of my confession." If only he had been more in the company of Socrates—so every reader of the "Symposium" was bound to say—how much better would it have been for Athens! But what, the same reader might perhaps ask—what about that *liaison* between the two men, which, in Socratic circles at least, used to be matter of jesting? Plato himself had touched on the subject, harmlessly enough, in his youthful works, as, for example, in the introduction to the "Protagoras," which runs as follows: "Where have you been, Socrates? But I need not ask. Where else should you have been but in pursuit of the fair Alcibiades?" But after the appearance of Polycrates' libel, he may well have thought it advisable to speak a word of enlightenment on the subject; which is exactly what he does, with a plainness that could not be surpassed, in the present encomium. This, again, provided him with a natural occasion for treating of Socrates' attitude towards erotic sentiment in general. It was precisely the well-known incontinence of Alcibiades against which he

wished the temperance of his wise friend to stand out in vivid contrast.

At this point the apologetic purpose merges into Plato's craving to delineate his own peculiar erotic mysticism. It is here hardly possible for us moderns to enter into his feelings. All we can do is to point out analogies—kindred phases of sentiment in Mohammedan Persians, Hafiz, for example; the extravagances of mediæval chivalry; above all, Dante and his Beatrice. For as the last-named opened the gates of Paradise to the Italian poet, so Plato, guided but not overmastered by the erotic impulse, rose to the vision of the ideal of beauty and of all the ethical and religious grandeur with which it is so closely associated. No proof, we think, is needed that in the teaching ascribed to the wise woman of Mantinea, the author of the "Symposium" is giving utterance to his own deepest feeling and most intimate experience. From no other source could he have derived that warm glow and colour of life. Features, too, are not wanting of the most individual and personal kind. The rivalry with the great poets of the past, the confident hope of winning, by his works, immortality like that of Homer, the "discourses about virtue" which are the fruit of love, and the earnest endeavour to educate and ennoble the beloved youth—all this is something more than Platonic doctrine: it is part of Plato's own life. We venture, though with some hesitation, to go a step further, and name, as the chief object of this etherealized affection, Dion, to whom Plato dedicated an epitaph replete with memories of passionate feeling. Quite in accordance with Diotima's rule, Dion was no immature boy, but a youth of about twenty, distinguished in appearance and highly gifted, when Plato, who was some fifteen years older, first met him at Syracuse. Philosophy was not the only subject of their conversations; they were busy with projects of political and social regeneration, which the philosopher hoped he might one day realize by the aid of the prince. On this view there is point and pertinence in that otherwise irrelevant mention of legislative achievement among the fruits of the love-bond.

But on the wide ocean of Beauty to which the river of Love conducts us, there rises into view an enchanted island, radiant with imperishable glory—we mean that metaphysical creation which is known as the doctrine of Ideas. With this creation, with its intellectual roots and ramifications, with the influences it has exerted, and with the transformations which it has undergone, it will now be our task to make ourselves acquainted.

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